



School of online and distance learning

**COURSE: PGD IN MONITORING AND
EVALUATION**

MODULE SEVEN ASSESSMENT TEST

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Q1: Where M&E necessitates revision of project plans, outline key steps Program Management teams need to take towards this end. (10 mrks)

Program management is continuous process what needs to be checked throughout the cycle for more tangible results to be achieved. The following steps are very vital for management teams to implore during Monitoring and Evaluation processes: -

- Obtain monitoring information for each funded project through the respective quarterly progress report (if used). This should answer the questions: What progress has the organization made in delivering the agreed outputs in the reference period? What progress has the organization made towards achieving the overall outcomes? What are the program-level issues that require action? What are we learning as a program? These monitoring reports can trigger change in the next phase of the project.
- Determine if outputs being generated with each project remain valid and contribute to achieving corresponding outcomes and see what can be adjusted.
- Participate in dialogue with relevant stakeholders at the outcome, sector and national level. This will help harmonies out outstanding differences that might have arisen during the implementation phase.
- Determine if other partners are contributing as planned and identify gaps to be addressed and opportunities for forging stronger partnerships.
- Triangulate monitoring information to obtain a more objective assessment of program 's contribution to each outcome. Identify issues and changes that are necessary to further dialogue at the respective outcome monitoring mechanism.
- Analyze to what extent the organization has integrated key concerns such as capacity development, gender equality, beneficiary ownership and stakeholder cooperation.

- Summarize key relevant points for the program for corporate reporting purposes and decision making at the annual program review.
- Implement the necessary changes agreed at annual reviews. The same analytical work should feed the corporate learning and reporting processes.

Q2: Briefly explain in about 250 words the key actions required at project-level monitoring work and describe the key variances between project level monitoring and program level monitoring. (10mrks).

Monitoring data normally aggregates from project level to higher level results. At the project level, the use of monitoring information can be summarized as follows: -

The first monitoring action at the project level is to be clear of what is expected in terms of project specific results and what is to be done with respect to monitoring actions. At the beginning, projects should: have a clear scope (that continues to be clear throughout the project); expected deliverables and how these contribute to the higher-level results; ensure that cumulative annual targets are adequate to produce the envisaged outputs; and ensure that they lead to the delivery of planned outputs in the agreed time frame. This information is initially captured in the project results framework and its M&E framework. This process should be repeated at each annual project review to continuously validate that delivery of outputs is on schedule and remains relevant. Monitoring data should be collected according to the project/program annual work plan (AWPS). The project should review the data to:

- Revalidate if the project and program results logic remain valid in light of the operational experience and evidence.
- Discern what issues have emerged during implementation: Have the foreseen risks and assumptions materialized? Have other unforeseen challenges, opportunities and risks materialized? Are these being managed? Progress towards generating outputs and their

continued relevance to the outcomes should be synthesized and forwarded to the agency to which the project reports and to the respective outcome or sectoral monitoring mechanism.

On the basis of that monitoring data, the project management or M&E steering committee should reconfirm that the delivery of outputs is on schedule and that the project is contributing towards the desired outcomes. If not, they should determine what changes are needed.

If revisions to plans are needed, then the project management should draft the revisions, including the results framework with new cost estimates, annual targets and so forth, to facilitate decision making at higher levels. Such information could be provided at agreed intervals such as quarterly, semiannually, annually or on an as-needed basis.

The following key variances exist between project level monitoring and program level monitoring (*Westland, 2019*)

- **Structure:** A project is well-defined, with a *Project Charter* that spells out exactly what the scope and objectives are for the project. A program tends to have greater levels of uncertainty. The team is also bigger. The program team are supervising and coordinating the work on a number of projects so while the core team may not have that many people in, the wider team includes the project managers and all the project team members.
- **Effort:** This is the most significant difference between projects and programs. A project represents a single effort. It is a group of people forming a team working towards a common goal. A program is different; it is a collection of projects. Together all the projects form a cohesive package of work. The different projects are complimentary and help the program achieve its overall objectives. There are likely to be overlaps and dependencies between the projects, so a program manager will assess these and work with the project managers concerned to check that overall the whole program progresses smoothly.

- **Duration:** Some projects do go on for several years but most of the projects you'll work on will be shorter than that. On the other hand, programs are definitely longer. As they set out to deliver more stuff, they take longer. Programs tend to be split into tranches or phases. Some projects are also split like this, but not all projects last long enough to be delivered in multiple phases.
- **Benefits:** A project team works towards achieving certain outputs, that is, what you get at the end. For example, this could be a set of deliverables that form a software package, or a new retail branch, or whatever it is that you are working on. The benefits of a project tend to be tangible: you get a 'thing' at the end of it. A program team works towards delivering outcomes. Outcomes can be tangible but are often not. The benefits of a program are the sum of the benefits of all the different projects and this could amount to a policy or cultural change, or a shift in the way an organization works.

References:

1. Westland, Jason; The Difference between a project and a program (2019).
Accessible via this [Link](#)
2. UNDP, 'Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results', Evaluation Office, New York, NY, 2002.