**MODULE 3 Questions:**

**Registration number: Aipms 262/2019**

**Q1:** Explain the value of M&E in about 100 words and outline key planning steps for setting up an M&E plan (10 mrks)

Over the last decade, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes have become an important source of knowledge management and organisational learning in the public sector. (Richard Mugula, 2014).

Many organisations are realising the value of ‘knowing what they know’ and being able to extract that knowledge and use it to improve their operations. Today, success and survival in this increasingly competitive environment critically depend on the quality of knowledge management and learning that public entities employ.

In the M&E domain, knowledge means the utilisation of information, combined with the potential of people’s skills, technical competencies, insights, thoughts, commitments and motivations. In public entities, knowledge resides in different places distributed across the organisation such as knowledge hubs, databases, filing cabinets and peoples, heads. Organisations need to know what their knowledge resources are and what M&E processes to employ to extract this knowledge.

Knowledge management on the other hand is the assembly of the processes that govern the creation, dissemination, and utilisation of data and information. It is about managing the processes of developing, preserving, using and sharing knowledge to add value to the organisation.

The ideal of participatory approaches and participatory M&E is to enable people to take an active role in their own development: to be actors in the development process is the ultimate goal. In general, expanding any group of actors’ participation is a long process, the first stages of which are incremental participation in decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is therefore useful to see participation on a continuum.

Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation implies higher levels of participation:

People are helped to define their own problems and solutions.

There is a high degree of ownership.

People have active rather than passive roles.

The process is empowering.

The guiding principle in participatory planning, M&E is that the process is as important as the product itself. The process itself leads to key results in terms of empowerment.

The breadth and degree of stakeholder participation feasible in M&E activities will depend in part on the kind of participation achieved in the programme, or in the case of assessment, in the national and local processes. Nonetheless, M&E activities can be used to open greater participation.

Expanding the breadth and depth of stakeholders’ participation brings changes to many aspects of an M/E activity — its focus and purpose as well as the process required for carrying it out. The table below shows how different breadth and degrees of stakeholder participation, again seeing participation on a continuum, is likely to influence the nature of a particular M&E activity.

The table highlights points to the fact that not every M&E activity can fit the interests and needs of all stakeholders. Good overall M&E planning for a programme requires a judicious selection of M&E activities that respond to different users (e.g. external donors, international organisations, national partners, primary stakeholders) and different purposes (e.g. external accountability, or capacity building of national partners, or expanding space for primary stakeholder voice and participation). Ideally there will a few strategically important M&E activities where a broader range of stakeholders can be brought together to explore common research/evaluation questions.

**Identify program goals and objectives**

The first step to creating an M&E plan is to identify the program goals and objectives. If the program already has a [logic model](https://www.thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-logic-model-0) or theory of change, then the program goals are most likely already defined. However, if not, the M&E plan is a great place to start. Identify the program goals and objectives.

### Define indicators

Once the program’s goals and objectives are defined, it is time to define indicators for tracking progress towards achieving those goals. Program indicators should be a mix of those that measure process, or what is being done in the program, and those that measure outcomes.

[Process indicators](https://www.thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan#process) track the progress of the program. They help to answer the question, “Are activities being implemented as planned?” [Outcome indicators](https://www.thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan#outcome) track how successful program activities have been at achieving program objectives. They help to answer the question, “Have program activities made a difference?”

### Define data collection methods and timeline

After creating monitoring indicators, it is time to decide on methods for gathering data and how often various data will be recorded to track indicators. This should be a conversation between program staff, stakeholders, and donors. These methods will have important implications for what data collection methods will be used and how the results will be reported.

The source of monitoring data depends largely on what each indicator is trying to measure. The program will likely need multiple data sources to answer all of the programming questions. Once it is determined how data will be collected, it is also necessary to decide how often it will be collected. This will be affected by donor requirements, available resources, and the timeline of the intervention. Some data will be continuously gathered by the program (such as the number of trainings), but these will be recorded every six months or once a year, depending on the M&E plan. Other types of data depend on outside sources, such as clinic and DHS data.

After all of these questions have been answered, a table like the one below can be made to include in the M&E plan.

### Identify M&E roles and responsibilities

The next element of the M&E plan is a section on roles and responsibilities. It is important to decide from the early planning stages who is responsible for collecting the data for each indicator. This will probably be a mix of M&E staff, research staff, and program staff. Everyone will need to work together to get data collected accurately and in a timely fashion.

Data management roles should be decided with input from all team members so everyone is on the same page and knows which indicators they are assigned. This way when it is time for reporting there are no surprises.

### Create an analysis plan and reporting templates

Once all of the data have been collected, someone will need to compile and analyze it to fill in a results table for internal review and external reporting. This is likely to be an in-house M&E manager or research assistant for the program.

The M&E plan should include a section with details about what data will be analyzed and how the results will be presented. Do research staff need to perform any statistical tests to get the needed answers? If so, what tests are they and what data will be used in them? What software program will be used to analyze data and make reporting tables? Excel? SPSS? These are important considerations.

Another good thing to include in the plan is a blank table for indicator reporting. These tables should outline the indicators, data, and time period of reporting. They can also include things like the indicator target, and how far the program has progressed towards that target.

### Plan for dissemination and donor reporting

The last element of the M&E plan describes how and to whom data will be disseminated. Data for data’s sake should not be the ultimate goal of M&E efforts.  Data should always be collected for particular purposes. The M&E plan should include plans for internal dissemination among the program team, as well as wider dissemination among stakeholders and donors. For example, a program team may want to review data on a monthly basis to make programmatic decisions and develop future workplans, while meetings with the donor to review data and program progress might occur quarterly or annually. Dissemination of printed or digital materials might occur at more frequent intervals. These options should be discussed with stakeholders and your team to determine reasonable expectations for data review and to develop plans for dissemination early in the program. If these plans are in place from the beginning and become routine for the project, meetings and other kinds of periodic review have a much better chance of being productive ones that everyone looks forward to.

**Q2:** Describe the relevance of stakeholder participation in M&E (10 mrks)

Stakeholder participation is the process where various stakeholders participate in the work of M&E. Therefore, the relevance of stakeholder participation in M&E are as follows;

**Common understanding of problems and identification of solutions.** Participative monitoring helps stakeholders to get a shared understanding of the problems facing the community or project. This facilitates the identification of solutions, this solutions are more likely to be appropriate because they are derived from a current situation.

**Benefits the target groups and enhances accountability.** Participation of stakeholders in monitoring ensures that the people to which the project was intended are the ones benefiting from it. It increases the awareness of people`s rights, which elicits their participation in guarding against project resource misappropriation. Guarding against resource misappropriation makes project implementation less expensive.

**Making appropriate decisions**. Monitoring provides information necessary in making management decisions. When many people participate in monitoring it means that they have participated in providing management information and contributed to decision making. The decisions from this are more likely to be acceptable and relevant to the majority of the population. This makes human and resource mobilization for project implementation easier.

**Performance improvement during monitoring.** If a performance deviation is discovered solutions can be devised. To find appropriate decisions that can be implemented requires the participation of those people who will put the solution into practice. Therefore, participation in monitoring can help improve project performance.

**Design of projects**. The information generated during project monitoring helps in re-designing projects in that locality to make them more acceptable.

**Collection of information.** If many people participate in monitoring they are more likely to come up with more accurate information. This is because, information that is omitted by one party can be collected by the other. Each stakeholder is putting varying emphasis on the different aspects of the project using different methods.

**Q3:** It is imperative that sufficient resources are allocated to the conduct of

M&E in a program. discuss this assertion in about 350 words. (10 mrks)

Resource allocation arises as an issue because the resources of a project are always limited in supply and because any given resource can have many alternative uses. Based on experience and specifics of each M&E system, it is possible to determine the amount of necessary resources in regards to each M&E step. The most effective M&E systems are the ones that match the system’s purpose and design with the project’s ability to implement it in terms of its capacity. A part of this capacity is the resources allowed for use in M&E (Cristina, 2012). These may be categorized into three; (a) financial capacity to do M&E; (b) Human capacity to do M&E

(People, skills and knowledge) and (c) Physical capacity to do M&E

(equipment, technology and machines) (UNAIDS, 2008).

Financial capacity to do M&E is critical for any work to be undertaken. Credibility of information gathered from M&E system that is underfunded would be questioned more so on the quality of that information. More likely is the fact that crucial data may have been left out. As Woodhill (2005) points out, utilization of such data may not be meaningful.

Human capacity to do M&E refers to the ability of persons mandated to carry out M&E activities. This ability includes a variety of skills and knowledge to steer each step in an M&E system. Organizations need to invest in skilled personnel to run M&E either by; 1) hiring already trained people, which may be very difficult for most projects to achieve because few

people are skilled in conventional M&E; 2) training the people you need either on-the-job or through external courses; 3) hiring external consultants for focused inputs (IFAD, 2002). Ability to gather and interpret data to make it usable and the ability to themselves use the same is the key element of investing resources in M&E personnel (Briceño, 2010).

In building capacity for M&E several strategies and interventions have been suggested. Douglah et al (2003) listed a number of them that were used by development organizations around the word to improve the performance of M&E. They include; leadership development; sufficient

allocation of resources; team-building; coaching; mentoring; exchange visits; technical assistance; and, short and long-term training. Besides this, they argued that based on indicators drawn from existing literature, demand for M&E increases when there is: (i) Well-positioned individual and institutional champions across the system; (ii) incentives that link performance data, monitoring information and evaluation recommendations to resource

allocation that is results orientated; (iii) commissioning of appropriate evaluations that use the recommendations, rather than focusing on monitoring.

Physical capacity to do M&E include; equipment, technology and machines. These influences utilization of M&E result by the quality of data gathered and establishing communication channels to ensure that clients are kept informed of progress and initial findings in simple languages understandable by the intended users (Tilbury, 2007). Data arrangement and

presentation may cause misunderstanding making it impossible to use.

**Q4:** What are the key considerations and questions that both monitoring and evaluation seeks to answer? Explain giving project examples. (10 Mrks)

M&E of adaptation to climate change is concerned with tracking the implementation of adaptation actions and assessing which results have been achieved. Assessing adaptation outcomes is faced with a number of challenges including the lack of a universal indicator to quantify adaptation, the close interrelationship between adaptation and development, the uncertainty of future climate change impacts at local level and the long-time horizons involved Chapter 10 – Key considerations for M&E of community-based adaptation Timo Leiter Enhancing adaptation to climate change in developing countries through CBA – ACTS Press 5 (for more details please see Bours et al., 2014a or Olivier & Leiter, 2013). These challenges explain why it is difficult to evaluate adaptation outcomes in practice. They also illustrate that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to assessing adaptation. In contrast, M&E systems for adaptation need to be tailor made to the respective context. Drawing on the literature and empirical experience on adaptation M&E to date, four key considerations should underpin the development of any adaptation M&E system at any level. These are; the purpose of M&E, the content of the M&E system, the intended use of the M&E findings, and the resources available to develop and operate it

Looking at what the project intended to achieve – was the change or impact intended achieved? If not, why not?

Looking at the project plan, organizational strategy, or specific thematic policies - was there a clear plan/strategy/policy in place? Was this utilized to shape activities? Did the plan/strategy/ policy work? If not, why not?

Looking at processes - was there an efficient use of resources? What was the opportunity cost of resource allocation? How sustainable is the way the project or organization works? What are the implications for the various stakeholders in the way the organization works?

Has there been any change in the operating environment/context? If so what and why? Are the needs still the same, or have needs evolved that the programme is not addressing?

To what extent are the right people being targeted by the project? How does it compare to overall needs and input of other agencies? Is any readjustment required?

Is the project activity plan on track? If not, why not and what can be done to correct this?

If the current rate of progress continues, will project activities achieve the intended objectives (outputs and outcomes)? If not, why not and what can be done to correct this?

Is the project having any unanticipated effects? Are these positive or negative?

Has the project achieved the intended indicator level?

**Q5:** Explain the relationship between *change assumptions”* and *impact* in a project. (10Mrks)

A change pathway/ impact chain can be useful because it reveals the interrelationships between activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts and therefore also your change assumptions or theory about how you think change will be achieved. These assumptions are often implicit rather than explicit so you may not even be aware of them. If you haven‘t already done so it‘s worth taking time in your Organization to discuss them to see whether you are all in agreement, whether they seem plausible, and/or whether you might need to investigate them more. You could test them against existing theories of change, evidence and/or your practical experience or the experience of other groups. The more well-founded your change assumptions at the start the greater your impact is likely to be.

A Change assumption articulates the assumptions about the process through which change will occur, and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving a desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur (Anderson, 2006). Here, it comprises the description or visualisation of the change process and accompanying assumptions from problem definition to the identification of knowledge gaps through research design and execution to the realisation of expected output and outcomes and the desired contribution to impact. It is an important tool for monitoring and evaluation, and in particular for learning.

An Impact scheme is used as the base for monitoring and evaluation and describes in detail the output (i.e. the direct and tangible results) to outcome (e.g. changes in awareness, skills or understanding resulting from use of research results) and impact relations, with verifiable and preferably measurable indicators for output and outcome.

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