**AFRICA CENTER FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

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**MODULE 3 ASSIGNMENT**

**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)

**Answers**

M&E, in itself, should not be seen as having an inherent value. The value of M&E does not come from conducting M&E or having such information available; rather the value comes from using the information to monitor, guide and control implementation for enhanced performance and better results.

The expected benefits of M&E, or potential “returns on investment in M&E”, are however difficult to state in financial terms. This is because some benefits do not lend themselves to easy quantification. For example, how can one measure, in financial terms, the benefit of knowing that one type of implementation is more effective than another? Ultimately, a more effective implementation leads to better results and benefits and therefore enhanced “value-for-money”. However, some parts of the benefit-chain (immediate and intermediate outcomes leading to impacts) are more easily quantified in terms of “value-for-money” than others.

A **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan** is a document that helps to track and assess the results of the interventions throughout the life of a program. It is a living document that should be referred to and updated on a regular basis. While the specifics of each program’s M&E plan will look different, they should all follow the same basic structure and include the same key elements.

**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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

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

**Answers**

Participation by project stakeholders means sharing a common understanding and involvement in the decision-making process of the project. Participation by stakeholders leads to empowerment and to joint ownership of the project. To increase participation the project should start with a consultation process that moves to negotiations and ends with joint decisions. Participation by project stakeholders has many benefits and advantages, among them are:

* Ensures that the project plans are a reflection of the real needs and priorities
* Develops an environment of trusts by allowing the voices of the stakeholders be heard and their issues be known
* Makes the project accountable to the stakeholders
* Enables the voices of the stakeholders to be heard and by doing that the level of trust in the relationships increases.
* Promotes transparency in the actions of the project and ensures that the project is held accountable for its actions.
* Increases ownership by stakeholders who feel the project is taking in account their views and motivates them to sponsor the project, which ultimately leads to sustainability.
* Is a key strategy to win support to the project, to gain commitment to the project, and ultimately to increase the chances for sustainability after the project has been completed.

**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)

**Answers**

In resource allocation, competing interests determine what is allocated for what in an organization. Sometimes M&E doesn’t get enough due to the importance attached to it. In M&E, resources are set for use continuously in monitoring activities and periodically for evaluations. In some instance we have seen projects allocate resources for monitoring only. This cast doubts on such an organization’s willingness to learn from the benefits of evaluations as we know them. Monitoring and evaluations activities need time and money. Finances are used to pay salaries for M&E personnel, Training in M&E related issues, buying software and hardware resources and so on. Taylor-Powell et al. (2008) argues that resources necessary for M&E may also include what is used to hire evaluation and expertise, buy evaluation reference materials and facilitate evaluation champions. But we need to validate that indeed what we invest in M&E improves its results utilization.

A well-funded M&E process will leave little to chance in their effort to collect quality data that would help improve utilization. The available human (time and know-how ) and financial resources for the development and running of the M&E system determine the feasibility of the M&E design. Costs can be reduced if stakeholders provide in-kind support through staff time and if existing data sources are utilized as far as possible (Leiter, 2013). Arrangements to sustain the M&E system once it is operational need to be made. Kenya for example has introduced “Data Supply and Reporting Obligation Agreements” between organisations whose data sources are required for the national M&E system

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

**Answers**

There are four key considerations should underpin the development of any adaptation M&E system at any level. These are:

1. The purpose of M&E,

The purpose of M&E M&E is typically done to serve a particular purpose. Three general purposes of M&E are frequently stated: (1) to support (adaptive) management, (2) to facilitate learning, and (3) to provide accountability. Each of these purposes puts different requirements on the M&E system. For instance, producing a report may be sufficient to fulfil accountability, but a report itself does not guarantee learning. Therefore, M&E systems need to be designed in a way that facilitates the desired purpose(s).

1. The content of the M&E system,

The design of an M&E system depends on what exactly it is meant to be focusing on. A common distinction is made between a focus on implementation of adaptation (referred to as “process orientation”) and results of adaptation (referred to as “outcome orientation”

1. The intended use of the M&E findings, and

Along with the purpose of M&E the intended use and audiences for information generated by the M&E system need to be identified at the beginning

1. The resources available to develop and operate it.

The available human (time and know-how ) and financial resources for the development and running of the M&E system determine the feasibility of the M&E design. Costs can be reduced if stakeholders provide in-kind support through staff time and if existing data sources are utilized as far as possible

**The key questions that monitoring seeks to answer includes the following:**

* Are the pre-identified outputs being produced as planned and efficiently?
* What are the issues, risks and challenges that we face or foresee that need to be taken into account to ensure the achievement of results?
* What decisions need to be made concerning changes to the already planned work in subsequent stages?
* Will the planned and delivered outputs continue to be relevant for the achievement of the envisioned outcomes?
* Are the outcomes we envisaged remaining relevant and effective for achieving the overall national priorities, goals and impacts?
* What are we learning?

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

**Answers**

*change assumptions* describes the processes of change by outlining the causal pathways from outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through direct outcomes (changes resulting from the use of outputs by key stakeholders) through other ‘intermediate states’ towards impact.

It explains the process of change by outlining causal linkages in an intervention, i.e., its outputs, direct outcomes, ‘intermediate states’, and longer-term outcomes. The identified changes are mapped as a set of interrelated pathways with each pathway showing the required outcomes in logical relationship with respect to the others, as well as chronological flow. Each ‘step’ in the pathway is a prerequisite for the next. The change processes between outcomes/intermediate states may require certain conditions to hold (assumptions1 - conditions that are beyond the direct control of the project) or may be facilitated by supporting actions or conditions (drivers - where the project has a measure of control and can make a meaningful influence). The TOC also clearly identifies the main stakeholders involved in the change processes and what role they play in, and/or how they are affected by, the changes. Change assumption is most commonly used to assess an intervention’s causal logic, effectiveness and likelihood of impact.

**REFERENCES**

Evaluation Toolbox. Step by Step Guide to Create your M&E Plan. Retrieved from: <http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23:create-m-and-e-plan&catid=8:planning-your-evaluation&Itemid=44>

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