Module 1 Questions:

Q1**: Explain in about 350 words why M&E informs good programming practice. (10 marks)**

Monitoring and evaluation is a component of good programming practice. Monitoring and evaluation is among consensus validated and recommended by professionals in project management. Set up a monitoring and evaluation system in your organization is a proof of a good management, recognized by evaluators. This is due to many quality advantages of M&E:

* Monitoring and evaluations identify key sources of information and produces key elements enabling to assess a project, which will show that the project is achieving set targets. For example, this is possible through baseline and end line data produced through regular monitoring and KAP survey, reporting and end of project evaluation, training reports and follow-up monitoring, etc…
* M&E allows actors to learn from experience, built on basis of knowledge and expertise. This knowledge and experience is shared as recommendations and lessons learnt for future projects. This is one of the objectives pursued by midterm or final evaluation. M&E provides a way for NGOs to go beyond a simple project and incorporate experiences in their policies. Based on this experience, it provides a solid foundation for fundraising.
* M&E generates (written) reports that contribute to transparency and accountability. For example, field visit monitoring reports show that the project officer has done a follow up of activities. This builds trust between the donor and the implementing agency, specially related to good resources management. M&E creates crucial link between practitioners, beneficiaries and donors.
* M&E reveals errors and offers opportunities for learning and improvement. Between the project design and its implementation, project factors may evolve. Project team may also misunderstand the project. M & E allows to follow the evolution of context and the implementation of activities, to correct and adapt the project. M&E identifies also issues related to planning or tools. In short, M&E helps improve performance and achieve results.
* M&E provides a basis for questioning and testing hypotheses. At the beginning, some elements need to be tested and verified. M&E allows to plan this process with key steps before concluding with evidences.
* M&E contributes to the storage of information and thus to the collective memory. An NGO without M&E system will have no history. It establishes links between the past, present and future actions.

Finally, M&E provides relevant information and data to make decisions about the organization, project, strategy or planning.

Q2**: Describe the fundamental similarities and differences between Monitoring and Evaluation. (10 marks)**

Monitoring and evaluation play diverse roles in project management. Comparing them, we can say that there are differences and similarities between the two tools.

**Similarities**: there two main similarities between the two monitoring and evaluation.

**Management tools**: Monitoring and evaluation are key components/phases of project life cycle. They are management tools as they serve in decision making. For example, during a monitoring field visit of an Irish Aid project in Bandiagara area in 2013, i have noticed key issues related to beneficiaries targeting. Politicians have been involved in the action and were influencing negatively the identification of recipients. At the end of the visit, based on recommendations of this monitoring, a solution meeting has been organized with implementing partner. Strong selection committees with representatives of different social groups have been requested to be set up to ensure more transparency and impartiality. This has helped to manage the concern, and this is one of the main role of monitoring. Evaluation recommendations play the same role of improving action. At the end of evaluations where I was involved, a management response was submitted to management team with recommendations, actions, person responsible and date of achievement, to improve the performance of the organization.

**Process**: Monitoring and evaluations follow the same basics process: observation and collection of information, reflection (analysis and assessment of findings) and decision making regarding new action to be taken.

**Differences**: there are six main differences between the two tools.

**Aim:** the aim of monitoring is to check whether the implementation of a project is on track and to serve as a basis for evaluation. The aim of evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

**Timing**. While working with a local partner in the Irish Aid project, the monitoring plan included many components: baseline study conducted at the start of the project; quarterly monitoring visits by project officer to ensure activities are on track and provide technical support; support visit by the advisor to provide support on the results-based approach; 3 visits by finance team to ensure compliance with financial procedures; regular project committee meetings will local partner to monitor progress; regular activity reports by the local partner; post-distribution monitoring and beneficiary satisfaction surveys by project staff. This highlights that monitoring is a continuous process.

On the contrary, evaluation is a periodic review at significant point of the project. For example, for the same project, an evaluation has been conducted within 3 months of the end. An internal midterm evaluation has also been done. While working with Christian Aid, the DRR/resilient livelihoods programming (2008 – 2011) impact evaluation has been done in January 2014, three years after the end. Evaluation can occur before the project (needs assessment) or during implementation phase (midterm evaluation), but in general, evaluation occurs at the end of the project (final evaluation) and sometimes after the project (impact assessment).

**Scope**: Monitoring includes day to day activities, outputs and indicators. Monitoring occurs during the implementation of the project. It intervenes at operational level and focuses on efficiency. For the Irish Aid project, monitoring included also elements like support local partner to set-up project, orientate staff on compliance requirements, review and update of results framework with baseline info. Evaluation scope encompasses overall delivery of outputs, progress, outcomes, longer term impact. As it intervenes at business level, it gives a judgment, and focuses on improving effectiveness.

**Main participants**. Monitoring participants are mainly project staff and project users. This includes technical, finance team, advisors, country programme manager, directors and the donor. In general, responsibility for monitoring usually lies with the staff of organizations implementing the action specially the supervisors. Evaluations participants involve external evaluators / facilitators, project users, project staff and donors. Even if internal evaluation involves staff of the organization, they must strongly involve those who are not implementing directly activities. Evaluation is usually the responsibility of managers and are performed by consultants outside the organization to ensure neutrality in analysis or performed.

**Process:** Monitoring uses regular meetings, interviews, surveys but evaluation uses extraordinary meetings, interviews and additional data. As example; for the monitoring of UNMAS project in Mali in 2017, the project has used digital data collection techniques to collect information’s: post-distribution monitoring of cash, Pre- and Post-test of training sessions, regular discussions with stakeholders at commune and circle level (NGOs and Authorities) to obtain their opinions and comments on the activities. The impact assessment has used mid-term, end-point assessment (Post-KABP surveys) and end line impact assessment in all target locations.

**Written outputs:** for the monitoring regular reports and updates have sent to project users, management and donors. Monitoring reports can be oral or written as it can be formal or informal just to inform the users about activities implementations. For the evaluation, written report with recommendations for changes to project are presented in workshops to different stakeholders. For above UNMAS project, an internal review exercise (internal evaluation) has been conducted at midterm. Data collected, and the report have been presented, discussed and validated during a workshop with the lead NGO, the partner, UNMAS, communities and authority’s representatives, project focal points, and used to adapt the approach as appropriate. The partner capacity building plan has also been refined based on performance, challenges and lessons learned.

Q3: **Describe the difference between formative and summative evaluation process and explain the time of each process in the life of a project.10mrks)**

**Differences between formative and summative evaluation**

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| **Basis for comparison** | **Formative** | **Summative** |
| Point of evaluation | Process evaluation, in general there is a focus on operational components (activities, strategies, timeline, barriers). Can take place more than one time | Focus is on achievements and so outcome or impact; accomplished stated goals. Term end |
| Participants | Staff members usually involved | Usually external consultants |
| Aim | Findings can lead to changes in the structure and implementation of the project | Findings lead planning follow-up activities or future programs |
| Outcome | Evaluation here is considered a process | Evaluation is considered a product |

**Time of each process in the life of a project:** Formative evaluations are interim evaluations. They are carried during the project in a special period allowing to draw recommendations for improvement. Summative evaluations are carried at the end or after completion of the project, recommendations will be for future projects.

Q4: **With brief explanations, outline the key questions both formative and summative evaluations seek to answer. (10mrks)**

Formative evaluation focus on the process of the implementation project with key questions related to:

* **activities and strategies**: what we do and how we do it, compared to what is planned in the proposal
* **timeline of the project**. In the project, a timeline has been approved. The evaluation must measure if this has been respected and if there is need to be updated due to the evolution of the project environment
* **staff personnel**. It is an opportunity to evaluate the personnel, to ensure it fits to the project, and if necessary, to propose capacity building, new recruitment or other changes.
* **financial concerns:** like the availability of funds and the level of costs compared to initial budget and allow to do adjustments
* **strengths and weaknesses**: lessons learnt allow to perform the project
* **participation of beneficiaries**: for empowerment, their dignity and suitability it is important to evaluate and encourage beneficiaries to engage
* **Satisfaction**: feedback about beneficiaries and community satisfaction allow to correct or enhance the action

Summative evaluations stress on following key elements:

* **achievement of overall goals and objectives**. It is the best way to know if a project has been successful.
* **impact of the project**. A good project must bring lasting changes in the life of beneficiaries. Development or resilience projects generally aim for this type of change. The change can be what has been planned or unintended changes.
* **replicability**: summative evaluation prospects how to use the experience of this project for future projects. Recommendations and lessons learnt will be useful in another project environment.
* **sustainability**. One of the advantage of the beneficiaries to participate in evaluation is their empowerment so as to go forward with projects outcomes even if the project is over. Summative evaluations evaluate this component and if necessary propose an exit strategy.

Q5: **Explain the main limitations of the pretest-post-test model of evaluation (10mrks)**

* The pretest-posttest design has limitations that must be considered. Pretest and posttest model lacks scientific rigor. The posttest is not taken until several months after the pretest so part of the difference between the posttest and the pretest may result from external factors such as social, political, economic, and environmental factors. They can interfere in the results and biase the link between the pre and post assessment. For example, administering pretest and posttest after a training, it is hard to discern if the positive change charted in a pre-posttest is due to learning in the classroom or simply natural maturation.

The pretest must be administered before the beginning of the project or training. If the activity had already been implemented, no possibility to use this model. Important consideration is also the logistics of collecting the data. It is difficult to survey or measure the same individual’s multiple times and link their responses from pre-test to post-test. There is a potential bias related to this.