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| Post Graduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation |
| Module 6 Assignment: Developing an M&E plan |
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**Q 1: Explain the value of considering the implementation capacity and what steps to take therein while developing an M&E plan in an organization. (20 mrks)**

Implementation capacity must be considered when creating and putting in place a Monitoring and Evaluation plan because without valued and trained staff and without the allocated financial capacities, a thorough assessment and update of the plan cannot take place.

A methodology applied to describe and portray the value of implementation of capacity could be the organizational approach, as stated by Lusthaus, Adrien and Perstinger (1999), since it describes the capacity of an organization (or more) the key to true development and change. This approach can be considered even more relevant to a Monitoring and Implementation plan as it takes under consideration all underlying and surrounding issues, such as social and political contexts.

Considering implementation capacity can have beneficial effects not just for the Monitoring and Implementation plan, but for the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, as it will allow evaluating the current level of human capacity and envisage trainings to strengthen the knowledge of current human resources or the hiring of new staff.

Therefore, when developing a Monitoring and Evaluation plan, knowing the capacity that is needed or that is present should enable the officer creating said plan to establish a set course of action. First of all, having already appropriate resources will allow the indicators that will be presented in the Monitoring and Evaluation plan to be SMART. Furthermore, it will validate that all the data collected come from appropriate sources and have been collected in a methodological, legal and accountable manner.

Another step that would add value to a Monitoring and Evaluation plan would be to build a baseline for all the different data that will be collected during the implementation of the project, so that indicators can be measured faithfully and so that data can easily be defined as relevant.

Of course, besides aligning the indicators through a matrix and ensuring a baseline for them, this plan should include a description of which activities and/or results will be monitored, and how that will be done.

Once these steps are all taken, preceded by an introduction of course, the plan should be disseminated, not only internally, but also to external recipients such as donors, consortium partners, national and international institutions, so to share not only results but also the approaches selected and whether they were successful or not.

**Q2: Explain the main qualitative features of an M&E plan, which distinguishes it from any other plan in M&E. (10mrks)**

What makes an M&E plan different from any other plan in M&E is the eclectic range of content. Eclectic and thorough, the different sections enable people beyond the implementing organisation to fully understand the actions behind the project, as well as the expected and real results of the intervention.

As any M&E plan, the M&E plan describes the methodology behind the tracking of the activities and the results of the project. What is different from any other plan in M&E however is that it encompasses all the stages of the programme cycle, from the conception point, up to the ex-post step.

First of all, the M&E plan outlines the indicators created specifically for this project, the ones outlined in the logical and/or results frameworks. Through this step, the plan explains how the organisational staff entails to monitor the progress of the project and to evaluate whether the expected results are being attained according to the time frame established at the conception point.

Furthermore, an M&E plan describes in great detail the approaches and/or methodologies employed to measure the indicators, to collect data for baseline and onwards, to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of the project, of the staff and activities and to evaluate whether the resources – human, financial, technological – are being used to their full potential. Ensuring that all aspects of an intervention are taken under consideration is crucial to creating a solid monitoring and evaluation plan.

Also, a crucial aspect of a plan for monitoring and evaluation includes is highlighting the importance and utility of disseminating the plan. This, because a Monitoring and Evaluation officer and its tools should not only be used to ensure a good implementation of one project for one organisation, but should rather be shared internally *and* externally to spread knowledge and good practices and experiences.

A good Monitoring and Evaluation plan also includes a detailed description of the resources that will be employed with a thorough justifications.

Overall a Monitoring and Evaluation plan, as mentioned above, should take into consideration all steps of the programme cycle, so that each chapter/section can reflect and justify the thought process behind it.

**References**

Lusthaus, C., Adrien, M. and Perstinger, M. (1999). Capacity Development: Definitions, Issues and Implications for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. In: Universalia Occasional Paper No. 35.