

Monitoring and Evaluation: Are We Making a Difference?

by Justine Hunter

Published by

Namibia Institute for Democracy

Funded by

United States Agency for International Development [USAID] and Embassy of Finland

Copyright: 2009 Namibia Institute for Democracy

No part of the book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the permission of the publisher.

Design and Layout: DV8 Saatchi & Saatchi

Printed by: John Meinert Printing, Windhoek, Namibia, 2009

Language Editor: William Hofmeyr

ISBN: 978-99916-860-0-4



Acknowledgements

The Namibian Institute for Democracy wishes to thank Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung (InWEnt) for permitting the incorporation of material that was presented at InWEnt's First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held from 11 to 14 November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and in the context of the training course "Measuring Democracy, Governance and Human Rights" that took place from 16 to 27 June 2008 in Windhoek, Namibia.

Acronyms and initialisms

CSO	civil society organisation
InWEnt	Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung
M & E	monitoring and evaluation
MoVs	means of verification
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

Contents

Acknowledgements

Acronyms and initialisms

1	Introduction	5
2	What is monitoring and evaluation?	6
3	Why undertake monitoring and evaluation?	6
4	Differences and links between monitoring and evaluation	7
	4.1 Monitoring	7
	4.2 Evaluation	8
	4.2.1 Pre-test – post-test model	11
	4.2.2 Comparison group model	11
	4.2.3 Different approaches to monitoring and evaluation	12
	4.3 Links between monitoring and evaluation	14
5	Stakeholder participation in monitoring and evaluation	16
6	Integrating monitoring and evaluation in project proposals	17
7	Baseline data and needs assessments	18
8	Logical framework analysis	19
	8.1 Monitoring and evaluation systems	19
	8.2 The logical framework matrix	20
9	Indicators	23
	9.1 What is an indicator?	23
	9.2 How to develop indicators	27
10	Methods and tools	29
11	Data management	37
12	Data analysis	44
13	Report writing	39
14	Improving performance	41

Sources

Appendix	44
Exercise 1	44
Exercise 2	44
Exercise 3	44
Exercise 4	45
Exercise 5	45
Exercise 6	45
Exercise 7	46
Exercise 8	46

Tables

Table 1: Different approaches to evaluation.....	13
Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations	13
Table 3: Comparison of monitoring and evaluation.....	14
Table 4: Complementary roles of monitoring and evaluation	14
Table 5: Non-participatory and participatory M & E.....	17
Table 6: The logical framework matrix structure	21
Table 7: Data collection methods.....	30
Table 8: Suggested structure of an evaluation report.....	40
Figure 1: Example of database software uses (Excel).....	37



1 Introduction

In developing countries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) are implementing projects that are intended to lead to, amongst other things, the social welfare and upliftment or political education of the projects' beneficiaries. In many cases, funding for the projects comes from donors and development agencies. These funds are public, and donors and development agencies are consequently accountable to the taxpayers in their respective countries. NGOs and CSOs should therefore manage the funds that have been allocated to them in a transparent and accountable manner. When implementing development projects, the organisations' managers should ask themselves some pertinent questions:

- Are we making a difference for the project's beneficiaries?
- Are we using the funds that have been allocated to us in a responsible manner? Are the allocated funds sufficient?
- Does our organisation have sufficient human capacity to carry out its tasks?
- Do our staff members act in a transparent and accountable manner?
- Are we fulfilling the commitments we made to our donors at the outset, when we signed contracts that bind us to the rules?
- If not, what are the loopholes, pitfalls and other weaknesses in our organisation and project implementation?
- How can we modify our projects and learn from our mistakes?

***“Getting something wrong is not a crime.
Failing to learn from past mistakes
because you are not monitoring and evaluating is.”***

Source: www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

However, besides being donor requirements, monitoring and evaluation (M & E) are also important management tools. Donors are certainly entitled to know whether the public funds they provided have been properly spent. The most important application of M & E, however, should be for ourselves as NGOs and CSOs, to establish if our projects are really making a difference for our beneficiaries. And if we discover that they are not, we have to learn how to improve our performance and make appropriate changes to project plans.

M & E contribute to the strengthening of institutions, human resource capacity-building and professional financial management. Through the application of M & E techniques, NGOs and CSOs will improve their overall capacity for efficient project management and implementation. This training manual therefore targets staff members in NGOs and CSOs working in project planning and implementation with the aim of providing them with practical tools that will enhance their results-based management capacity. It aims at strengthening awareness of and interest in M & E, and at clarifying what it entails. The manual reviews the nature and characteristics of M & E, presents basic M & E concepts, principles, research tools and methods, reviews the planning and implementation of effective M & E plans, and suggests ways for gathering, analysing and reporting on M & E results. In addition, it provides numerous practical examples and exercises.

2 What is monitoring and evaluation?

It is increasingly recognised that M & E are indispensable management functions, and they are therefore set by donor agencies as preconditions for the allocation of funds to NGOs and CSOs. Monitoring and evaluation tend to be understood as one and the same thing. Though related, however, they are two different sets of organisational activities. **Monitoring** is the systematic collection and analysis of information as a project progresses. It is a valuable tool for good management. It helps NGO and CSO staff members to determine whether financial resources are sufficient and are being well used, whether the human capacity in their organisations is adequate, and whether they are actually doing what they planned to do. **Evaluation** occurs at the termination of the project, but sometimes also at mid-term, when what was promised in the project proposal is compared with what has been accomplished, and actual project impacts are measured against the strategic plans agreed upon with donors at the project's outset.

M & E can help one to:

- identify problems and their causes;
- recommend possible solutions to problems;
- raise questions about project assumptions and strategies that were outlined in the initial project proposal; and
- reflect on where the project is going, and on how best to accomplish its aims and objectives.

The power of measuring results:

- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it.
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it.
- If you cannot recognise failure, you cannot correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support and donor interest.

Source: National Treasury South Africa. Integrating Performance Measurement (M&E) in the Planning Process Using Results-Based Management – A Case Study. Presented by Shanil Haricharan at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

3 Why undertake monitoring and evaluation?

There are many reasons why an NGO or CSO should undertake M & E:

- We need to know whether our project meets its objectives (as outlined in the project proposal) and whether it is leading to the desired effects among its beneficiaries (our target group).
- Through data gathering, we generate detailed information about the project's progress and the results it has obtained.
- By doing M & E, we build greater transparency and accountability regarding the management of financial resources provided by donor agencies.

- The information we generate through M & E provides project managers with a clearer basis for decision-making.
- Through M & E, we can find out if the project is running as initially planned.
- M & E inform us about the strengths and weaknesses of our project implementation.
- M & E allow us to detect unexpected and unintended results and effects of our project.
- We can establish if our project implementation has been weakened by external factors that are out of our control (e.g. social, economic or political developments).
- M & E document and explain the reasons why project activities succeed or fail.
- By learning lessons from mistakes we might have made, we will be empowered to improve our future project planning and implementation.

To illustrate our argument, we would like to share a story from British politics with you:

In the 1960s, a British Professor in Political Science wrote his doctoral thesis on the British Housing Act of 1957. Around twenty years later, he decided to refresh his research on the topic and visited his former interview partner that had been the responsible Minister at the time. The Professor started the interview by noting that by now everyone has agreed that the Housing Policy that the Minister has been responsible for at the time has been a complete failure. The Professor thought that this was an uncontroversial statement of fact. But the former Minister was of a different opinion. He asked: "What do you mean by saying that the Act was a failure?" The Professor replied that although the Act's objective was to build 300 000 houses per year, in no year when the Act was in force had anything like this number of houses actually been built. The Minister was amused and replied: "My dear Professor, the objective of the Housing Act of 1957 was to get rid of Housing as a topic of political controversy. And it was so successful that Housing did not surface as a contentious political question for more than ten years. In my opinion, the Housing Act was therefore an unqualified success."

Source: National Treasury South Africa. Integrating Performance Measurement (M&E) in the Planning Process Using Results-Based Management – A Case Study. Presented by Shanil Haricharan at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

4 Differences and links between monitoring and evaluation

4.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is an on-going activity that tracks the progress of the project during its lifetime. Therefore, monitoring is an integral part of our day-to-day operational management. It is used to continuously assess the progress made with the project when viewed against its goals and objectives, as outlined in the project proposal. It involves the so-called logical framework (see Section 8) through which we track inputs, processes, activities, outputs and outcomes. These are already outlined in the project proposal that is forwarded to donors in the planning stage of the project. Thus, monitoring is based on targets set and activities planned during the planning phase. These are tracked by using indicators (see Section 9). Monitoring is important,

as it might be necessary to modify activities should it emerge that they are not achieving the desired results. Monitoring therefore helps us to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a project.

Through routine data gathering, monitoring aims at:

- continuously assessing the project implementation in relation to the project plans, resources and infrastructure, and the accessing of services by project beneficiaries;
- providing regular feedback for an ongoing learning process;
- improving the effectiveness of project interventions;
- increasing accountability with donors and other stakeholders;
- enabling project staff to identify strengths and successes, and alerting them to actual and potential weaknesses and shortcomings;
- giving us time to make adjustments and take corrective actions where these are required;
- enabling us to find out whether the project continues to be relevant for our target group; and
- informing us on how well our project is performing against the expected results, as outlined in the project proposal.

Monitoring should be an internal function in every NGO/CSO.

It involves the following:

- establishing indicators on efficiency, effectiveness and impact (see Section 9);
- setting up an M & E system (see Section 8) relating to these indicators;
- collecting and recording information (sourcing and management of data);
- analysing the information (see Section 12); and
- if necessary, using the information to improve project management (see Section 14).

Monitoring is an on-going activity to track project progress during the lifetime of the project. It is a continuous process of collecting and analysing information to compare how well a project is performing against expected results. **Evaluation** will either be done at mid-term or at the end of the project, or both.

4.2 Evaluation

Evaluation will be performed either at mid-term or at the end of the project, on conclusion of all activities. Evaluation is a scientifically based assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project. We assess the overall design, implementation and results of the completed interventions. Evaluation thus deals with strategic issues such as project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (see Section 8) in the light of the objectives formulated at the outset of the project. **Evaluation includes:**

- looking at the aims and objectives of the project (What difference did this project set out to make? What impact should it have had?);
- assessing the progress made towards what we wanted to achieve at the outset;
- looking at the strategy chosen to implement the project (Did the strategy work? If not, why not?); and
- assessing whether or not funds were used efficiently.

There are many different ways to perform an evaluation:

- **Self-evaluation:** You are holding the mirror to yourself to assess how you are doing and how you can improve on your performance. It is essential that you are honest and willing to reflect as objectively as possible on yourself.
- **Participatory evaluation:** You involve not only the organisation's project staff in the evaluation but also a representative sample of the beneficiaries of the project.
- **Rapid participatory evaluation:** This is a qualitative way of performing evaluations. It involves a number of different methods and tools (see Section 10), for instance literature/data review, direct observation, semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries, and focus group discussions.
- **External evaluation:** This is usually done by a consultant who has been commissioned by the donor agency.
- **Interactive evaluation:** This involves intense interaction between the external evaluator appointed by the donor agency and staff members of your organisation.

It might be necessary to provide an evaluation report not only when the project is completed, but also while interventions are still ongoing, for instance through mid-term or semi-annual progress reports. An evaluation that is performed at mid-term is called a **formative evaluation**. This means that it takes place while the project is still running. The intention of the formative evaluation is to improve the functioning of the project while it is still possible to do so. It can predict the project's final effects and can highlight adjustments that are required to the project design. It examines the development of the project and may lead to changes in the way the project is structured. In contrast, a **summative evaluation** only allows us to draw lessons once the project has been completed. It therefore does not enable us to make improvements to the specific project being evaluated. However, lessons may be learnt that can be applied to enhance future projects and improve the functioning of the organisation. It is an overall assessment of the project's performance and its impact. It assesses the extent to which the programme has succeeded in meeting its objectives, and the potential sustainability of gains made through the programme.

- **Formative evaluations** are conducted at mid-term (also called **periodic evaluations**) or semi-annually (also called **process evaluations**).
- **Summative evaluations** are only conducted when the project has been completed. Summative evaluations are also called **terminal, final, outcome** or **impact evaluations**.

Questions typically asked in **formative evaluations** include:

- To what extent do the activities correspond with those presented in the proposal? If they do not correspond, why were changes made? And were the changes justified?
- Did the project follow the timeline presented in the proposal?
- Have the personnel that carried out the activities out been suitable?
- Are the project's actual costs in line with initial budget allocations?
- To what extent is the project moving towards the anticipated goals and objectives?
- What challenges and obstacles have been identified? And how have they been dealt with?
- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the project?

Questions typically asked in **summative evaluations** include:

- To which extent did the project meet its overall goals and objectives?
- What impact did the project have on the lives of the beneficiaries?
- Which components were the most effective?
- What significant unintended (accidental, not deliberate) impacts did the project have?
- Is the project replicable (can it be repeated)?
- Is the project sustainable?

For all of the questions relating to **formative** and **summative evaluations**, both **quantitative data** (expressed in numbers) and **qualitative data** (expressed in narratives and descriptions) might be useful.

Summative evaluations fall into two categories: **end evaluations**, which aim to establish the situation when external aid is terminated and identify the possible need for follow-up activities; and **ex-post evaluations**, which are carried out two to five years after external support has been terminated. The main purpose is to assess what lasting impact the project has had or is likely to have (sustainability) and to extract lessons from the experience.

Evaluations scrutinise both the **outcome** (any results or consequences of a project) and the **impact** (a particular type of outcome – the ultimate effects of the project). The main question that impact evaluations try to answer is whether the project has made a (positive) difference in the lives of the beneficiaries.

We refer to the **outcome** as the short-term results (on the level of the purpose of the project), typically changes in the way beneficiaries do things as a result of the project. We refer to the **impact** as the long-term results (on the level of broader goals) – in a sense, the ultimate, eventual effects of the outcome.

An example on the distinction between outcome and impact:

After a campaign was conducted by an NGO involved in health issues, mothers in a community were found to be treating the diarrhoea of their children properly at home – this is the **outcome** of the project. Because of this improved home treatment, child mortality in the region where this community is situated was lowered – this is the **impact** of the project.

The aim is to establish a causal link between the outcome and the impact of a project. We will now review the most commonly used models to establish this causal link.

4.2.1 Pre-test – post-test model

The basic assumption of the pre-test – post-test model is that were it not for the implementation of the project, the particular undesirable situation of the projects' beneficiaries would persist (continue); and conversely, that as a result of the project, their situation should improve. Thus, we measure their situation before the project commences and after the conclusion of the project. The differences or changes noted between these measurements are taken to be caused by the project's implementation. For such a comparison to be valid, the pre-test and post-test must be essentially identical, and we must be careful to make sure that our own personal bias does not affect the measurements that are made. Information must be gathered from the same group of beneficiaries; we must also take into account the fact that other events and factors like social, political or economic developments that are unrelated to the project could have played a role.

The main advantage of this model is that it is relatively easy to implement, as one works with the same group of beneficiaries. The main disadvantage is the possibility that measured changes are the result of factors other than the project itself. In other words, changes might be attributable (at least in part) to external factors rather than the project's implementation. This problem could be dealt with by adopting the **multiple time-series model**, in which measurements are also taken at a number of points during the project's implementation, rather than only before its outset and after its conclusion.

Implementation steps for the pre-test – post-test model:

- Prepare a list of indicators (see Section 9) that would test your project outcomes.
- Choose methods for your data collection (see Section 10).
- Apply these methods with your group of beneficiaries before you implement your project (pre-test).
- Repeat the same methods with the same group of beneficiaries at the end of the project (post-test).
- Analyse and compare the results from the pre -test and the post-test (see Section 12).
- Write a report (see Section 13).

An example of a pre-test – post-test evaluation:

For two years, an NGO has been undertaking HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. At the outset of the campaign, the beneficiaries of the project were asked whether they use condoms. Around 75% of the respondents answered that they never use condoms. Two years later, after the conclusion of the campaign, the same group of beneficiaries were asked the same question. This time, only about 25% of them said that they did not use condoms. The outcome of the project was therefore more frequent use of condoms among the beneficiaries. The impact of the project might be a lower rate of new HIV infections in the area.

4.2.2 Comparison group model

Another evaluation model is called the **comparison group model**. The situation of the group of beneficiaries is not compared before and after project implementation. Rather, the method is to compare two similar groups only at the end of the project. The one group consists of beneficiaries of the project, and the other group of people who have not benefited from the project. It is important that in all other respects the groups should have similar characteristics

(e.g. gender balance, educational level, age group spread, socio-economic status, geographical status). As long as the groups are indeed as close as possible to identical, except for being or not being beneficiaries, the main differences between the two groups can be attributed to the project's interventions. The advantage of this model is that it is relatively easy to link differences between the groups to the project's intervention. The disadvantage is that it might be difficult to find an otherwise identical group of non-beneficiaries to compare to the group of beneficiaries.

Implementation steps of the comparison group model:

- Prepare a list of indicators that would test the project's outcomes (see Section 9).
- Choose a method for data collection (see Section 10).
- Select a comparison group that has very similar characteristics to your group of beneficiaries.
- Apply your methods with a representative sample of the beneficiaries group and the comparison group at the same time at the end of the project.
- Compare the findings.
- Write a report (see Section 13).

An example of a comparison group evaluation:

A NGO undertook HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in Village A. At the end of the campaign, representative samples of the beneficiaries of the project that live in Village A were asked if they frequently use condoms when having sexual intercourse, and 75% of the respondent said that they did use condoms. This finding was compared to results from another survey among a representative sample of people living in neighbouring Village B. The respondents from Village B show similar characteristics to those of Village A: both mainly consist of households headed by male, communal subsistence farmers between 25 and 45 years old, with similar educational and socioeconomic characteristics. Among the respondents living in Village B, only 35% said they used condoms on a regular basis. The differences in the frequency of condom use may therefore be attributed to the awareness campaign among beneficiaries living in Village A.

Some models are more likely than others to establish the causal link between outcome and impact. In evaluation terms, we call this the **scientific error** or **validity** of the model.

4.2.3 Different approaches to monitoring and evaluation

Finally, we should mention different approaches to M & E. If you would like to undertake a high-quality evaluation, you should use a combination of some of the approaches outlined in Table 1 below. (However, due to the costs involved and the lack of suitably qualified staff that you might experience, in most cases you will be forced to make a choice.) Table 2 below shows the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations.

Table 1: Different approaches to evaluation

Approach	Major purpose	Typical focus question	Likely methodology
Goal-based	Assessing whether we achieved our goals and objectives	Did we achieve our goals? And has this been done in an efficient manner?	Comparing baseline and progress data (see Section 7) by using indicators (see Section 9)
Decision-making	Providing information	Is the project effective? Should it continue? How should it be modified?	Establishing decision-making consensus within the organisation
Goal-free	Assessing all the effects of the project (both intended and unintended)	What are the outcomes of the project? Are they valuable?	Quantitative and qualitative research methods (see Section 10)
Expert judgment	Use of expertise	How would a professional outsider rate this project?	Independent critical review based on experience

Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Internal evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The evaluators are familiar with the organisation, the project and its aims and objectives. ▪ It is a management tool, a way of self-correcting, and much less threatening. This makes it easier for those involved to accept the process. ▪ It is less expensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The evaluators may have a vested interest in reaching mainly positive conclusions. This is why donors might prefer an external evaluation. ▪ The team might not be appropriately skilled and trained. ▪ The evaluation will take up a considerable amount of organisational time.
External evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The evaluation is likely to be more objective. ▪ The evaluators should have the necessary expertise and experience. ▪ It gives greater credibility to the findings, particularly positive findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Someone from outside your region or even from outside the country may not fully understand the cultural and political circumstances. ▪ Your beneficiaries might feel threatened by outsiders and, as a result, may be less willing to talk. ▪ External evaluations might be very costly. However, external evaluators are usually directly commissioned by the donor agency.

4.3 Links between monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring usually precedes, leads up to and forms the basis for evaluation. This means that the findings of the monitoring process can be used in the evaluation process. The same baseline data (see Section 7) may be used for both processes. Monitoring and evaluation may furthermore make use of the same research tools (see Section 10). Because of limited time and financial and human resources, however, project evaluations are conducted less frequently than monitoring activities. Table 3 below compares monitoring and evaluation, while Table 4 below summarises their complementary roles.

Table 3: Comparison of monitoring and evaluation

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Frequency	On a regular basis (e.g. through quarterly progress reports and regular observation)	By mid-term or on conclusion (or ex-post, i.e. at least two years after the project has ended)
Main action	Tracking	Assessment
Basic purpose	Improving efficiency and adjusting the work plan, if necessary	Improving effectiveness, impact and future programming
Focus	Inputs, outputs, outcomes	Effectiveness, relevance, impact and cost-effectiveness
Information sources	Self-evaluation, participatory evaluation, rapid participatory evaluation	Same as for monitoring, plus external evaluation and interactive evaluation
Undertaken by	Project staff (in conjunction with beneficiaries)	Same as for monitoring, plus external evaluators (commissioned by donor agencies)

Table 4: Complementary roles of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains aims and objectives of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses why intended results were or were not achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links the objectives to the activities undertaken and the financial and human resources used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws conclusions on cost-effectiveness and staff performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translates objectives as outlined in the proposal into performance indicators (see Section 8.2) Collects data on these indicators and compares actual results with initial targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines the implementation process Explores unintended results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports progress to programme managers and alerts them to problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides lessons, highlights significant accomplishments or programme potential, and offers recommendations for improvement

Monitoring and evaluation may use the same baseline data and the same research tools.

What M & E have in common is that they are both geared towards helping us to learn from what we are doing or have done, and from how we are doing it or have done it, by focusing on:

Efficiency: This tells us if the input into the project is appropriate in the light of the output. This could be in terms of, for example, money, time, staff or equipment.

Effectiveness: Here we measure the extent to which our project has achieved the objectives we set at the outset.

Impact: This tells us whether or not we have had an influence on the problem situation we were trying to address. We assess if our strategy was useful, and if it would be worthwhile to replicate the project elsewhere.

Relevance: This tells us the degree to which the objectives of the project remain valid as initially planned in our project proposal. It determines whether project interventions and objectives are still relevant, given the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries' priorities might change over time as a result of social, political, demographic or environmental changes. As a result, on conclusion, a project might not be deemed to be as important as it was when initiated.

Sustainability: This measures the prospects for the maintenance of a project's positive results after external support by donor agencies has been withdrawn. Many development projects are not sustainable because neither the NGO involved nor the beneficiaries themselves have the financial capacity or the motivation to provide the resources needed for the activities to continue. As a result, donor agencies are interested in the long-term improvements brought about by any given project. They want to know how long they will need to support a project before it can run with local resources.

Examples of efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability:

- **Efficiency:** A donor agency allocated US\$ 20 000 to our organisation to write and disseminate a training manual. Three staff members of our organisation were involved in the dissemination process and were using company cars and petrol to distribute the publication. The fuel prices were high and the staff members received daily allowances to cover their costs for accommodation and meals. Was this the most efficient way to disseminate the training manuals, or would it have been cheaper to use the postal system? Or was meeting beneficiaries and stakeholders personally in order to give them some additional verbal explanations maybe important enough to justify the expense?
- **Effectiveness:** Our aim was to improve the knowledge of communal land rights of farmers in a region by conducting grassroots workshops. As a result of this knowledge transfer, fewer land disputes have been observed in this region.
- **Impact:** After receiving anti-corruption training, civil society activists in a town hold their local authorities accountable. They wrote a letter of complaint to the Anti-Corruption Commission, which, as a result, investigated the case. Two officials employed at this local authority were dismissed. Consequently, the level of corruption in this town decreased. It was felt that it would be worthwhile to implement the same project in another town.

Continued next page.

Continued from previous page.

- **Relevance:** Once an infectious epidemic has been eradicated, the justification for the project that dealt with the problem might no longer exist. Or, in the event of a natural disaster such as the Asian tsunami of December 2004, society's priorities shift to emergency or relief interventions, and other projects might become less important.
- **Sustainability:** A donor agency has funded a community-driven museum in a rural area. To cover its operational costs after the withdrawal of the project, the donor encouraged the responsible NGO to establish a restaurant and a craft centre as tourist attractions nearby the museum. The donor agency hopes that through income generated by the restaurant and the centre, the positive impact of this community project will continue after the termination of external support.

5 Stakeholder participation in monitoring and evaluation

There is a growing interest within the international aid community in **participatory approaches** to M & E. It has been found that the participation of stakeholders improves the quality of projects and increases the sense of national and local ownership in them, while simultaneously helping to address local development needs. Where this is the case, there is a greater likelihood that the project activities and their impacts will be sustainable. Stakeholder participation in M & E can strengthen partnerships and teamwork at all levels and stages of project implementation.

A stakeholder is anybody who "has a stake" in the project; stakeholders can thus be members of the community whose situation the project seeks to change (e.g. men, women, youths, health clinic personnel, teachers), programme managers and other staff at NGOs/CSOs, the donors themselves, and many others, including representatives of the local, regional and national levels of government. It makes sense, however, to target one or two of these groups to suit your specific needs. For example, if you want to identify obstacles to successful project implementation, you need to interview your own project staff. If the aim is to find out whether beneficiaries are satisfied with your project, it makes sense to ask members of the affected community. If you are involved in research on democratic institutions, it makes sense to have regular stakeholder meetings with government representatives.

Most of the documented examples of **participatory M & E** have been in the field of **agricultural, environmental and rural development** projects. Examples from the health and education fields are less readily available.

Table 5 below illustrates the principles that distinguish non-participatory M & E (without the participation of stakeholders) from participatory M & E.

Table 5: Non-participatory and participatory M & E

Non-participatory M & E	Participatory M & E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The main purpose is accountability to donors rather than empowerment of stakeholders. ▪ The emphasis is on the donors' need for information rather than the beneficiaries of the project. ▪ The focus is on the measurement of success according to predetermined (set) indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is a process of individual and collective learning through which people become more aware and conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, of their wider social and political realities, and of their visions and perspectives of development outcomes. ▪ It is a process of negotiating between people's different needs, expectations and worldviews.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2004). Programme Manager's Planning Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit. Tool Number 4: Stakeholder Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation. www.unfpa.org/monitoring/toolkit.htm

Participatory evaluation is useful for:

- institutional learning and capacity development through self-assessment;
- strengthening of partnerships between different stakeholders;
- allowing different stakeholders to articulate their needs, interests and expectations;
- facilitating reconciliation between different viewpoints; and
- creating ownership in research processes under problematic social and political circumstances or in prejudiced environments.

6 Integrating monitoring and evaluation in project proposals

M & E are regarded as integral and indispensable elements of project implementation. For this reason, project proposals should include a section outlining your M & E plan. It is important to remember that establishing an M & E system and applying methods of data gathering and analysis can be time-consuming and costly. M & E should therefore also feature as budget items in the proposal you submit to the donor agency. So M & E planning and design should be an integral part of project design, because it is very difficult to go back and set up M & E systems once you have already started to implement the project.

The first information gathering should take place when you establish baseline data and needs assessments (see Section 7). These are so important, in fact, that they have the potential to convince donor agencies to fund your project in the first place.

To incorporate M & E in your project design, you should:

- establish baseline data (see Section 7) describing the problems to be addressed;
- make sure that project objectives are clear, measurable and realistic;
- define specific project targets in accordance with the objectives;
- define indicators (see Section 9) to be used for M & E project performance and impact;
- define the types and sources of data needed and the methods of data collection (see Section 10) and analysis required based on indicators;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities for M & E of personnel within your organisation; and
- allocate an adequate budget for M & E.

Annual work plans should also be an integral part of your project proposal. The work plans should describe in detail the delivery of inputs (see Section 8.2), the activities to be conducted and the expected results. The annual work plans should clearly indicate time schedules and staff members responsible for conducting specific activities.

What does one mean by saying that **project objectives should be realistic?**

We can look at the example of an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. Let's say that approximately US\$ 20 000 has been allocated to an NGO to conduct a grassroots education workshops in a region. The purpose of this awareness campaign is to increase the frequency of condom usage among the beneficiaries; the objective of the campaign is to lower the number of new HIV infections in the region. It would be **unrealistic**, however, to assume that such a campaign could have the potential to reduce the overall HIV prevalence rate throughout Namibia by ten percent over the following two years.

7 Baseline data and needs assessments

The gathering of baseline data is also called a needs assessment. Baseline data and needs assessments provide the information you need against which to assess improvements caused by project implementation over time. In order to evaluate the impact your project has on the lives of beneficiaries, you have to be familiar with the situation of the beneficiaries before project implementation. Baseline data in this regard must be collected before the project starts. In fact, it makes sense to gather the data even before you forward your project proposal to donor agencies. The baseline data might help to convince the donor that it is important to provide funding for a specific project.

For example:

If the objective of our project is to reduce school dropout rates in a particular town, we have to know these rates prior to (before) project implementation. We can later compare them with dropout rates after the completion of the project. In an example such this one, it would make sense to use data provided by the Ministry of Education as baseline data.

Baseline surveys are especially important when the **pre-test – post-test model** is adopted for evaluation purposes (see Section 4.2.1). By comparing data that describe the situation to be addressed by a project (before the project commences) and data generated after the completion of the project, we will be able to measure changes in the situation of the beneficiaries and link these changes to our project's implementation. You can either use existing data, for example data published by the National Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics, or, if it is difficult to access relevant and reliable data, you can gather your own baseline data by using quantitative or qualitative research methods (see Section 10).

As explained above, it is difficult to go back and collect baseline data after you have already commenced with project implementation. However, if you failed to collect the information at the outset, there are ways of doing **damage control**. These include accessing anecdotal information from people who were involved in the initial phase of the project. You can also ask beneficiaries to recall their memories. Apart from speaking to people, you can also look at records and written sources.

8 Logical framework analysis

A logical framework analysis attempts to answer the following questions:

- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- What will tell us that we have arrived?

8.1 Monitoring and evaluation systems

An M & E system is a set of interacting or related components – for example, indicators (see Section 9), activities, processes or projects – that all serve a common objective. They are linked to each other by common definitions and measurement methods (see Section 10) and they must all be scientifically sound and well-founded.

All M & E data should be measurable. We have to understand that certain phenomena, such as happiness, cannot easily be measured. It is important that all M & E data should be:

- reliable (i.e. the data should be consistent and accurate);
- well-defined (we must take great care to define exactly what should be measured);
- verifiable (we must be able to prove that the data is accurate and valid, for example by repeating the data gathering process);
- cost-effective (we have to be able to show that the cost of the project is not too high, given the benefits it delivers);
- appropriate (we must be sure that it makes sense to measure the things we decide to measure); and
- relevant (the data must be able to demonstrate whether or not the project has achieved its goals, i.e. has made the intended improvements in the lives of the beneficiaries.)

To develop an M & E System, you can follow these steps:

- You should decide **WHAT** should be monitored in order to select indicators (see Section 9) and plan the data collection process.
- You should decide **HOW** the information should be gathered. Accordingly, you should select research methods (see Section 10) to track indicators and report on progress.
- Your annual plan should define **WHO** should gather information, and **WHEN** they are to gather it.

To improve M & E planning and design, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What are the **purposes** of the evaluation? Which ones are more important than others?
- What **evaluation model** (see Section 4.2) is the most appropriate for the project?
- When is the **best time** to carry out the evaluation?
- Which **questions** should the evaluation answer?
- What are the **best methods** of data gathering (see Section 10) to answer these questions?
- What **resources** are needed for the evaluation?

8.2 The logical framework matrix

M & E can strengthen project design and improve the quality of project interventions and decision-making. Likewise, good project design can improve the quality of M & E; conversely, the outcomes and impact of poorly designed projects are very difficult to measure. The **logical framework matrix** provides a useful structure for logical thinking during project design and implementation. It aids and simplifies analysis by linking the project objectives, strategies, inputs and activities to the specific needs of the beneficiaries. The main concepts and definitions of the logical framework matrix can be summarised as follows:

- **Problem analysis:** On the basis of baseline data and a needs assessment, the NGO/CSO (in conjunction with stakeholders and donor agencies) identifies the problems the project is intended to address.
- **Project objectives:** These must be developed on the basis of the problem analysis. Although projects are usually designed to address long-term sectoral or national goals, the objectives should be established so that they are specifically linked to the project interventions. They should be straightforward and realistic in terms of their timeframe and resources required, and it should be possible to measure the success of the project.
- **Project outputs:** These are the immediate results of the project: the number of schools renovated, the number of farmers that attended a training course, the number of textbooks printed, etc.
- **Project inputs and project activities:** Inputs (e.g. funds, human resources) and activities (e.g. offering training sessions, developing information booklets) will produce the outputs that should result in project objectives being achieved.

Accordingly, the logical framework matrix summarises:

- what the project intends to do, and how it will do it;
- what kind of effects are expected;
- what the project’s key assumptions are; and
- how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated.

Table 6 below presents the different levels of project objectives and the means to achieve them. Each lower level of activity should contribute to the achievement of the level above it: the implementation of project activities should contribute to the achievement of project outputs; project outputs should result in the achievement of project objectives; and so on. This is called **vertical logic**. The rows across indicate how the achievement of activities, outputs, objectives etc. can be measured and verified. This is called **horizontal logic**.

Table 6: The logical framework matrix structure

Project description	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions/risks
Goal: The broader development impact to which the project contributes on sectoral or national level	Measures of the extent to which a contribution to the goal has been made	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it	None
Purpose: The developmental outcome expected at the end of the project	Conditions at the end of the project indicating that the purpose has been achieved	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it	Assumptions/risks related to the linkage between purpose and goal
Objectives: The expected outcome of the outputs that were produced	Measures of the extent to which objectives have been achieved	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it	Assumptions/risks related to the linkage between objectives and purpose
Outputs: The direct measurable results of the project (goods and services)	Measures the quantity and quality of outputs and the timing of their delivery	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it	Assumptions/risks related to the linkage between outputs and objectives
Activities: The tasks carried out to implement the project and deliver the identified outputs	Work plan targets	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it	Assumptions/risks related to the linkage between activities and outputs

Source: Nabris, Khalid (2002). *Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)*

Terminology for the logical framework matrix:

- **“Goal”** refers to the sectoral and national objectives to which the project is designed to contribute. The goal can also be thought of as describing the expected impact of the project. It is a statement of intention that defines the main reason for undertaking the project.
- **“Purpose”** refers to what the project is expected to achieve in terms of its development outcome. The purpose relates only to the beneficiaries, a specific area and a timeframe.
- **“Objectives”** provide a logical link between the outputs and the project purpose.
- **“Outputs”** refers to specific results and products (goods and services) produced by undertaking a series of activities.
- **“Activities”** refers to actions and tasks undertaken to achieve the required outputs. Descriptions of activities should not include too much detail, because they easily become too lengthy.
- **“Inputs”** refers to the resources required to undertake the activities (e.g. personnel, equipment and materials). They should not be included in the matrix format.
- **“Assumptions”** refers to external conditions that could affect the progress or success of the project. The project manager has no direct control over these conditions (e.g. the inflation rate, upcoming elections). Assumptions relate to conditions that must pertain (exist, be in place) in order for project objectives to be achieved (e.g. peace, economic stability). Conversely, “risks” are conditions or events that might prevent the attainment of objectives (e.g. conflict, economic collapse).
- **“Indicators”** refers to information/observations that would help us to determine progress made towards attaining project objectives (see Section 9).
- **“Means of verification”** (MoVs) refers to the expected source of the information we need to collect. MoVs should clearly specify this source. They ensure that the indicators can be measured effectively by specification of types of data, sources of information and methods of collection (see Section 10).

Source: Adapted from Nabris, Khalid (2002). Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

The logical framework matrix can be used to improve the quality of project design, for the preparation of detailed work plans, and to provide an objective basis for M & E. It has the **advantage** that it forces one to ask fundamental questions and analyse assumptions and risks; it has the **disadvantage** that it might stifle creativity and innovation.

Six phases of performance measurement

- Phase 1: Educate staff members of your organisation about M & E.
- Phase 2: Design a logical framework.
- Phase 3: Establish what the right things are to measure (develop indicators, see Section 9).
- Phase 4: Choose a data collection strategy (use the right methods – see Section 10).
- Phase 5: Write a performance report (see Section 13).
- Phase 6: Improve your performance.

Source: National Treasury South Africa. Integrating Performance Measurement (M&E) in the Planning Process Using Results-Based Management – A Case Study. Presented by Shanil Haricharan at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Six key steps for gathering performance information

- Step 1: Agree on what you are aiming to achieve.
- Step 2: Specify impact, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs.
- Step 3: Select the most important indicators.
- Step 4: Set realistic performance targets (work plan).
- Step 5: Determine the process and format for reporting performance.
- Step 6: Establish processes and mechanisms to facilitate corrective action.

Source: National Treasury South Africa. Integrating Performance Measurement (M&E) in the Planning Process Using Results-Based Management – A Case Study. Presented by Shanil Haricharan at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Good project performance addresses these three elements:

- **Objectives:** This is what we want to achieve in our society through our project. This is the area where we want to “make a difference”.
- **Logical framework matrix:** This describes the steps through which we expect our project to achieve its objectives.
- **Performance indicators:** This is how we know that our project is on track to achieve its objectives.

Source: National Treasury South Africa. Integrating Performance Measurement (M&E) in the Planning Process Using Results-Based Management – A Case Study. Presented by Shanil Haricharan at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

9 Indicators

9.1 What is an indicator?

“It is better to have an approximate answer to the right question, than an exact answer to the wrong question.”

(Paraphrased from statistician John W. Tukey)

When implementing a project, we must focus on the central values on which most development work is built, and we must ask ourselves:

- Does our project serve the disadvantaged?
- Does our project empower the disadvantaged?
- Does it change society, not just individuals?
- Is it sustainable (see Section 4.3)?
- Is there an efficient use of resources (see Section 4.3)?

We have to **ask** ourselves:

- Who is benefiting from what we do, and to what extent are they benefiting?
- Does our project have a broader impact than just what is happening to our immediate project beneficiaries?
- Can what we are doing be sustained in some way in the long-term, or will the impact of our work cease when external funding runs out?
- Are we obtaining optimum outputs for the least possible inputs?

But how do we make our development work measurable? The answer lies in the setting of **indicators**. Indicators provide the questions that allow us to measure progress towards our project objectives. Answering these questions can give us information on the situation that will pertain when the project has concluded. They are also used to demonstrate changes in project results. In addition, they are helpful in that they provide evidence of the progress made towards the attainment of our objectives.

Indicators should already be established during the project design phase, as part of the project proposal. An indicator should provide a clearly defined unit of measurement. Indicators should be relevant and independent. They should demonstrate whether or not the objectives of the project have been achieved. Indicators enable project managers to track project progress, to demonstrate results and, if necessary, to take corrective action to improve project management. As an “early warning system”, they can help to identify problems and allow for corrective actions to be taken. They also indicate whether an in-depth evaluation of certain aspects of the project is needed.

Example of indicators:

The accomplishment of the objectives of some projects is difficult to measure. For example, an NGO organised a public lecture series to educate the public on electoral issues. To track project progress and demonstrate results, they decided, amongst other things, to measure the number of people attending the lectures, the ratio of males to females, and the percentage of various groups among the audience – students, lecturers, businesspeople, unemployed people, community activists, and so on. To measure the broader impact of the project, the NGO tracked down newspaper reports written on public lectures, readers’ letters and SMS responses, as well as telephone calls, emails and letters the NGO received in connection with the series.

It is important not to identify too many indicators, or indicators without accessible data sources. You should find out which indicators could help you to measure project progress by taking your financial and human resources into consideration.

Example:

In order to strengthen the interaction between citizens and parliament, an NGO conducted training-for-trainers workshops on advocacy skills. In order to find out whether these workshops benefited not only the workshops participants themselves, but also the broader public, the NGO conducted a follow-up by telephone. Former participants were asked whether they had passed the information they had gained on to fellow community activists. The NGO also wanted to find out if the participants had used their advocacy skills and lobbied parliamentarians on certain issues. In addition, the NGO contacted the parliamentarians named by the activists and tried to find out if the information they received had had any influence on legislation passed.

Indicators should be directly linked to the level of assessment:

Input indicators can be obtained from management and accounting records. They can be verified through internal record-keeping.

Output indicators show the immediate output of the project. They can also be verified through internal record-keeping.

Outcome indicators might be obtained by surveying beneficiaries' perceptions regarding project services. They depend on a number of factors. Some might be controlled by the project, others cannot be thus controlled. Outcome indicators require data collection among the beneficiaries of the project.

Impact indicators relate to long-term developmental change. Measures of change might involve complex economic and social welfare statistics, and depend on data gathered from beneficiaries. Again, some aspects of the impact can be controlled by the project, while others cannot. Some impact indicators, such as mortality rates or improvement in household income, are hard to attribute to the project in a direct cause-effect relation. The higher (and sometimes more unrealistic) the objective, the more difficult it becomes to demonstrate cause-effect linkages. Project impact will always be a result of a variety of factors, including but probably not limited to the project itself.

External indicators focus on general social, economic and environmental factors which are beyond the control of the project, but which might affect its outcome.

Examples regarding the relationship between cause and effect:

An NGO conducted awareness workshops on integrity and anti-corruption between 2003 and 2006. In the meantime, the country's score and ranking as measured by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index improved considerably. However, this might have been the result of a variety of factors, including the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Another example: Let's say that there is evidence to show that community members are participating in meetings more frequently than in the past. This might have been caused by the grassroots advocacy workshops an NGO had been conducting during the preceding six months. However, the increased participation might also have been due to the fact that a number of new people with a background in activism had come to live in the area.

Types of indicators: an example from the Urban Governance Index (UGI), for a project that aims to increase the availability of safe water by installing water connections in a district

- **Input indicators:** Resources available for improvement of basic services in a community. We measure these resources in US\$. Another indicator is the number of project officers involved in the project. We measure this in numbers (#) of personnel.
- **Process indicators:** Has civil society been involved in a formal participatory planning and budgeting process prior to the decision being taken to make investments in basic services? We measure this as a Yes/No answer.

Types of indicators continued on next page.

Types of indicators continued from previous page.

- **Performance indicators:** For example, we measure the average time required by the municipal authority to process a water connection. The measurement is made in number (#) of days.
- **Perception indicators:** We measure the degree of citizens' satisfaction with their access to water. For this, we use a five point scale (very satisfied; satisfied; neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; dissatisfied; very dissatisfied).
- **Output indicators:** Number of households with access to water within 200 meters of their dwellings (measured in # of households).
- **Outcome indicators:** Percentage of households with access to clean drinking water (measured as a percentage (%)).
- **Impact indicators:** Lowering of the under-five (U5) mortality rate (measured in percentage (%) of U5 children who die in this district).

Indicators represent what you measure. By using indicators you can answer the following questions: Who? How many? How often? How much? The problem with any measurements is that external variables may have had an impact, not just our project. However, one can be sure that if there are no changes in the lives of your beneficiaries and no improvements in the key indicators you identified, then the strategy of your project is not working.

When we develop indicators we usually face the following key challenges:

Sometimes the information gathering is easily manageable and the costs are relatively low. But do we really get meaningful results in these cases?

Sometimes we can get meaningful results, but do they also show meaningful change over time – i.e. do the outcomes of the project translate into a meaningful impact?

A popular code for remembering the characteristics of good indicators is **SMART**:

- S:** Specific (they are not too vague or general)
- M:** Measurable (it is possible to check them)
- A:** Attainable (they are realistic)
- R:** Relevant (the changes that they reflect are important)
- T:** Trackable (they can be tracked over a specific period of time)

Indicators are measurable signs that something has been done or that something has been achieved:

An increased number of television aerials in a community has been used as an indicator that the standard of living in this community has been improved. An indicator of increased community empowerment among female community members could be the frequency of interventions made by women during community meetings.

When direct measurement is not feasible, so-called proxy-indicators can be used. The following example illustrates what proxy-indicators are and when we should make use of them:

A research team is reluctant to ask respondents about their HIV-status. Instead, approximate levels of public health have been estimated by asking people about their physical and mental well-being. Instead of asking the respondents, “Are you HIV-positive or -negative?” the research team measures health by using the following questions as proxy-indicators: “Over the last month, for how long has your physical health reduced the amount of work you normally do inside or outside your home?”; and “Over the last month, for how long have you been so worried or anxious that you felt tired, worn out or exhausted?”

Source: Adapted from Hopwood, Graham, Justine Hunter & Doris Kellner (2007). The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Electoral Process in Namibia. Pretoria: Institute for Democracy in South Africa

9.2 How to develop indicators

To develop indicators, you can follow these steps:

- Step 1:** Identify the **problem situation** (baseline data, needs assessment) your project is addressing.
- Step 2:** Develop a vision on what the **objectives** of your project are. Based on these project objectives, you should work out which data could give you an indication of your having achieved what you were attempting to. For instance, if you are working in the health sector, possible questions could be: Has the infant mortality rate gone down? Do fewer women die during childbirth? Has the HIV-infection rate been reduced?
- Step 3:** Now you should identify **ways** in which to achieve your objectives. This exercise will lead you to the progress indicators. If you want success to be attained through community mobilisation, then your process indicators might include the number of community health workers that have been trained.
- Step 4:** The next step would be to define indicators for **effectiveness**. If you have a project that aims to increase the secondary school pass rate by training teachers, you have to find out if your project has achieved its objective. For example, you could circulate questionnaires among students in order to establish if they are satisfied with the quality of their teachers. It would be best to compare this data with data gathered before project implementation (pre-test – post-test model).
- Step 5:** Last but not least, you should develop indicators that measure the **efficiency** of the project. Here you can set indicators such as whether the envisaged workshops ran within the planned timeframe, and whether the costs for these workshops were kept to a minimum and were within budget.

Examples that should give you some idea of the kinds of indicators you can use (especially if you want to measure impact):

Economic development indicators:

- Average annual household income (#)
- Employment, by age group (%)
- Earned income levels (#)
- Per capita income (#)
- People living below the poverty line (%)

Social development indicators:

- Death rate (%)
- Life expectancy at birth (#)
- Infant mortality rates (%)
- Causes of death (% or #)
- Number of doctors/nurses per capita (#)
- Number of hospital beds per capita (#)
- Literacy rates, by age and gender (%)
- Student/teacher ratios (#:1)
- Number of suicides (#)
- Cause of accidents (% or #)
- Number of homeless (#)
- Number of violent crimes (#)
- Birth rate (%)
- Fertility rate (%)
- Rate of HIV infection (%)
- Rate of AIDS-related deaths (%)
- Church participation by age and gender (%)

Political/organisational development indicators:

- Number of NGOs/CSOs (#)
- Participation levels in organised sports (# or %)
- Number of youth groups (#)
- Participation in youth groups (# or %)
- Number of groups for the elderly (#)
- Structure of political leadership, by age and gender (%)
- Participation in elections, by age and gender (%)
- Number of public meetings held (#)
- Participation in public meetings, by age and gender (# or %)

Source: Adapted from Nabris, Khalid (2002). Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

10 Methods and tools

The methods and tools you choose for project evaluation largely depend on the funds available, documentation obtainable and the human resources and technical expertise present in your organisation. (For example, don't plan a comprehensive survey of 50 000 households if you only have two weeks and a very limited budget.) When choosing your method of data collection, select an option that seems practical and reasonable – one that your organisation can handle. Most formal methods have a high degree of reliability and scientific validity. The problem is that they are more expensive. Less formal methods might more easily generate information, but they are less precise because they might depend on subjective views and intuitions, rather than objective facts. So it is best to employ a number of different sources and methods of information gathering in order to cross-validate data (**triangulation**).

“Triangulation” refers to the simultaneous use of multiple evaluation methods. It provides the means to verify information and to explain conflicting evidence.

An **example** of triangulation: A questionnaire is circulated among workshop participants to quickly collect a great deal of information, including the gender, age and occupation of participants. At a later stage, a sample of former participants is contacted telephonically to get more in-depth information. In addition, case studies could be used for more in-depth analysis of unique and notable cases, for instance of those participants who clearly benefited from the workshop and those who did not. Thus, we have effectively combined quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Another example of the combination of quantitative and qualitative information: We need to know what the school enrolment figures for girls are, as well as why parents do or do not send their children to school. Perhaps enrolment figures are higher for girls than for boys because this specific community prefers to train boys to do traditional and practical tasks such as taking care of animals. In many cases, numbers and percentages (quantitative data) are not sufficient to explain complex phenomena.

Table 7 below provides an overview of some quantitative and qualitative data collection methods commonly used during evaluations. **Quantitative** measurements answer the questions “How much?” or “How many?”. Quantitative measurements can be expressed in absolute numbers (e.g. 10 women in the sample are HIV-positive) or as percentages (e.g. 15% of the women are HIV-positive) or as a ratio (e.g. in this country, there is one dentist for every 30 000 people). **Qualitative** measurements provide more in-depth information, for example because they tell you how respondents feel about a situation, or how they do certain things, or what their cultural behaviour patterns are. You get qualitative information by observing, asking and interpreting. It includes detailed descriptions, direct quotations in response to open-ended questions, analysis of case studies, the transcripts of focus group discussions, and your own observations.

Examples of **quantitative data collection**: How many people attended a workshop, how old were the participants, how many were male/female, how many were unemployed, how many people passed their final exams, how much does a publication cost, what is the average income of beneficiaries, how many people were HIV-positive, how far do people have to walk to get water or firewood, what is the average size of a household, and so on.

Examples of **qualitative data collection**: Sometimes quantitative information might not be enough. For example, in a given country, 90% of all girls and 95% of all boys attend primary school. These are solid and reliable percentages (quantitative information). However, these percentages do not tell us much about the **quality** of education. We can generate qualitative information by interviewing teachers and pupils and asking them about the standard of their education. Another example: Quantitative information may tell us, in a given situation, that the enrolment of girls at schools is dropping, but it would not tell us why this decline is taking place. In order to know that, we would need to go out and ask appropriate questions in order to get qualitative information.

Table 7: Data collection methods

Method	Purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
Questionnaires/surveys (quantitative)	Oral interviews or written questionnaires of a representative sample of respondents. Most appropriate when there is a need to quickly obtain information from beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produces reliable information ▪ Can be completed anonymously ▪ Easy to compare and analyse ▪ Can be administered easily to a large number of people ▪ Collects data in an organised manner ▪ Easy to reproduce similar questionnaires used in other projects ▪ Can be done immediately and as the project progresses ▪ Saves time as it is self-completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Might not provide in-depth analysis and careful feedback ▪ Data are analysed for groups, but not for individuals ▪ Might be costly and might require technical expertise if conducted on a larger scale ▪ Provides numbers and percentages (quantitative data) but no qualitative data (you might need to add an open-ended question)
Face-to-face interviews (qualitative)	Individual and group interviews to assess perceptions, views and satisfaction of beneficiaries. The interviews provide more in-depth analysis than surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gives full range and depth of information and rich data, details and new insights ▪ Permits face-to-face contact with respondents and provides opportunity to explore topics in-depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be difficult to analyse and compare ▪ Interviewer can influence responses ▪ Can be expensive and time-consuming ▪ Needs well-trained interviewers

Method	Purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
Face-to-face interviews (qualitative)	The interviews can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured. Questions can be open-ended or closed (yes/no questions, five-point-scale).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allows interviewer to probe, explain or help clarify questions ▪ Allows interviewer to be flexible in administering interviews to particular individuals and circumstances ▪ Can be done with almost anyone who is involved in the project ▪ Can be done in person, telephonically, or even by email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volume of information may be too large and difficult to reduce
Documentation review (quantitative and qualitative)	Review of relevant official statistics (e.g. Central Bureau of Statistics) and research reports under-taken by other organisations or scholars. Review of newspaper articles written on the subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No need to “reinvent the wheel” as you reproduce information that has already been generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time-consuming ▪ Information might be incomplete ▪ Information might not be easily obtainable (especially if your organisation operates in more remote, rural settings) ▪ Quality of information might be poor ▪ Data restricted to what already exists ▪ Data needs to be cross-validated by more “tailor-made” information
Observation (qualitative)	Field visits and observation gather accurate information about how a project operates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-suited for understanding processes and operations while the project is still running 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly dependent on observer’s understanding and interpretation ▪ Has limited potential for generalisation ▪ Can be difficult to analyse behaviour

Table 7: Data collection methods (continued)

Method	Purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
Observation (qualitative)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can adapt to events as they occur and exist in natural, unstructured and flexible settings Provides information on behaviour of individuals and groups Provides good opportunities for identifying unanticipated outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be complex to categorise observations Can be time-consuming Needs technical expertise
Focus groups (qualitative)	<p>A focus group brings together a representative group of 6 to 12 beneficiaries, who are asked a series of questions.</p> <p>Used for analysis of specific, complex problems, in order to identify attitudes and priorities among beneficiaries.</p> <p>Explores a topic in-depth through group discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient and reasonable in terms of costs Stimulates the generation of new ideas and perspectives Can be an efficient way to get a wide range of information in a short time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs experienced facilitators Can be hard to analyse responses Might be difficult to schedule 6 to 12 people together Can be time-consuming as focus group interviews might be recorded and then transcribed (providing that you have the specialised equipment to do so)
Case studies (qualitative)	<p>In-depth review of one or a small number of selected cases.</p> <p>To fully understand beneficiaries' experiences with the project.</p> <p>To conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-suited for understanding processes and for formulating hypotheses (assumptions) that can be tested later Powerful means to portray project to donors and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually time-consuming to collect, organise and describe

Method	Purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
 Key informant interviews (qualitative)	<p>Interviews with persons who are knowledgeable about the community targeted by the project.</p> <p>A key informant is a person who has unique professional background related to an issue, is knowledgeable about the beneficiaries, and has access to information of interest to the evaluator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexible, in-depth approach ▪ Easy to implement ▪ Might substitute the documentation review ▪ Advice/feedback increases credibility of study ▪ May have additional benefit of establishing relationship between project managers, beneficiaries and stakeholders ▪ Key informants can provide a “bigger picture” where people who are more personally involved may focus on the smaller level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk of biased interpretation from informants ▪ Time-consuming to select informants and get commitment ▪ Relationship between informant and project manager might influence data obtained ▪ Experts are seldom presents in remote, rural settings

Source: Adapted from Nabris, Khalid (2002). *Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf*

In order to avoid a huge workload at the end of the project, these methods of data collection should be incorporated into daily management operations. For example, it is less time-consuming and more cost-effective to circulate questionnaires at the end of each workshop instead of trying to telephonically or personally make contact with former participants at the end of the entire project implementation.

As outlined in Table 7 above, the various methods of data collection have their own strengths and weaknesses. Each has advantages and disadvantages in terms of costs and other practical and technical considerations. As no one method is appropriate for all situations, you should choose a method of data gathering that best fits with your needs and situation. Your choice will depend on practical considerations such as getting the work done within a specific timeframe, and with the funds and technical expertise available. For example, using a focus group might be more efficient than one-on-one interviews. On the one hand, it must be acknowledged that respondents might not give the same answers within a group as they would individually, as they might feel less free to express personal views in a group situation. On the other hand, focus groups can draw out deeper insights, as participants usually listen to what the others have to say before reacting. In conclusion, you should weigh the respective pros and cons when choosing your data collection methods. Ideally, the evaluator uses a combination of methods.

You might consider the following **list of questions** that might help you in selecting appropriate evaluation methods:

- What information is needed?
- Can this information be collected and analysed in a low-cost and practical manner?
- How accurate will the information be?
- Will the chosen methods obtain all the needed information?
- What additional methods might be used if additional information is needed?
- Will the information appear to be credible to project staff, donors and stakeholders?
- Are the methods appropriate to the target group? For example, if beneficiaries speak primarily Otjiherero and Afrikaans, the use of questionnaires in English might not be appropriate.
- Is training of project staff required to administer the methods? How can this training be provided?
- How can this information be analysed?

Source: Adapted from Nabris, Khalid (2002). Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

Example for **questionnaires/surveys:**

After the completion of an integrity-related workshop for civil society activists, the presenter of the workshop distributes questionnaires among the participants. These questionnaires should be anonymous in order to guarantee a truthful and straightforward assessment by the participants. However, it might be necessary for participants to forward personal information such as sex, age and employment status. The questionnaire includes yes/no questions, questions with five-point-scale-answers, and comments/open questions so that respondents can offer some explanations to the answers given. Topics addressed in the questionnaire include the following: Were questions answered sufficiently during the workshop? Did the material that was distributed assist with attaining the workshop objectives? Did you benefit from the workshop? Do you think that you can apply the new knowledge you have gained in your workplace? Was the workshop well organised? Was the class-time adequate and well-used? Was the presenter well-prepared?

Example for **interviews:**

After circulating an attendance register (that included columns where members of the audience could give their contact details) at a public event, the NGO contacted a representative sample of the participants via telephone and email and asked them about their understanding of relevant issues, the personal benefits they felt they had derived, and possible negative feelings regarding the event that they attended.

Examples for **documentation review:**

An NGO had been engaged in voter education projects that aimed at increasing the voter turnout in regional elections in a specific region. The NGO staff compared the voter turnout in the region during the last elections (baseline data) with the voter turnout in regional elections that took place after the project had been concluded. The statistical data were obtained from the Electoral Commission.

An NGO organised a public lecture series that aimed at strengthening public debate. In the aftermath of the series, the NGO perused mainstream newspapers, searching for articles, readers' letters and SMS text messages discussing the issues raised.

Example for **observation:**

The NGO that offered "training-for-trainers" advocacy workshops to rurally based civil society activists likes to investigate how the participants used the information that they gained, and whether they shared it with others. In order to conduct a first-hand observation, the NGO revisits the rural area where the initial training took place and accompanies the activists to sites where they share the information with others.

Example for **focus groups:**

An NGO produced posters as social marketing tools in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Caprivi Region. The NGO organised a focus group discussion with young people from Katima Mulilo to find out if the posters' message had any effect on sexual behavioural patterns among the youth.

Example for **case studies:**

Rurally based civil society activists attended a "training-for-trainers" advocacy workshop that was organised by a civil society umbrella organisation. As a result of the training that they received, the activists established a Human Rights and Documentation Centre where they offer legal advice to the people of their hometown. The umbrella organisation revisits this setting to observe this success story. Later on, a film team is invited to make a short documentary that will be presented at a civil society networking conference that the umbrella organisation organised for later the same year.

Example for **key informants interviews:**

An NGO provided material and technical support to a community radio station. In order to get experts' opinions and recommendations regarding the intervention, the NGO conducted interviews with lecturers at the University of Namibia's Department for Information and Communication Studies.

When choosing to conduct face-to-face interviews with a group of beneficiaries or planning to conduct focus group interviews, we need to use **sampling techniques**. Sampling helps us to narrow down the number of possible respondents to make data gathering more manageable and affordable.

Sampling techniques include:

- **Random sampling:** The sample is done on a sort of lottery basis, for example where the names of all beneficiaries (former participants) go into a container and are mixed up. Then names are drawn out until the required number has been reached. This sort of sampling is very difficult to apply, however, and for practical purposes, you might rather choose e.g. every seventh household in the community where your beneficiaries live, or every sixth name on your list of workshop participants, and so on.
- **Stratified sampling:** You choose, for example, every seventh household in the upper income bracket (e.g. in a more expensive area of the town) and every fifth household in the lower income bracket (e.g. in a poorer district).
- **Cluster sampling:** You include predefined groups, for example only women older than 50, or only participants who have attended more than two of the workshops you have organised.

Source: www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

Structured interviews follow a fixed set of questions. **Unstructured** interviews do not have any pre-prepared questions. **Semi-structured** interviews combine structured and unstructured techniques, with the interviewer asking some set questions but adding others in order to follow lines of enquiry that emerge during the interview.

Source: www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

Some DO'S and DON'TS for interviewing

- DO test the questionnaire for clarity and make sure that questions cannot be misunderstood.
- DO state clearly what the purpose of the interview is.
- DO assure the interviewee that what is said will be treated in confidence.
- DO ask if the interviewee minds if you take notes or tape record the interview.
- DO record the exact words of the interviewee, as far as this is possible.
- DO keep on talking as you write.
- DO cover the full schedule of questions.
- DO watch out for answers that are vague, and probe for more information where necessary.
- DO be flexible and note down everything interesting that is said, even if it isn't on the schedule.

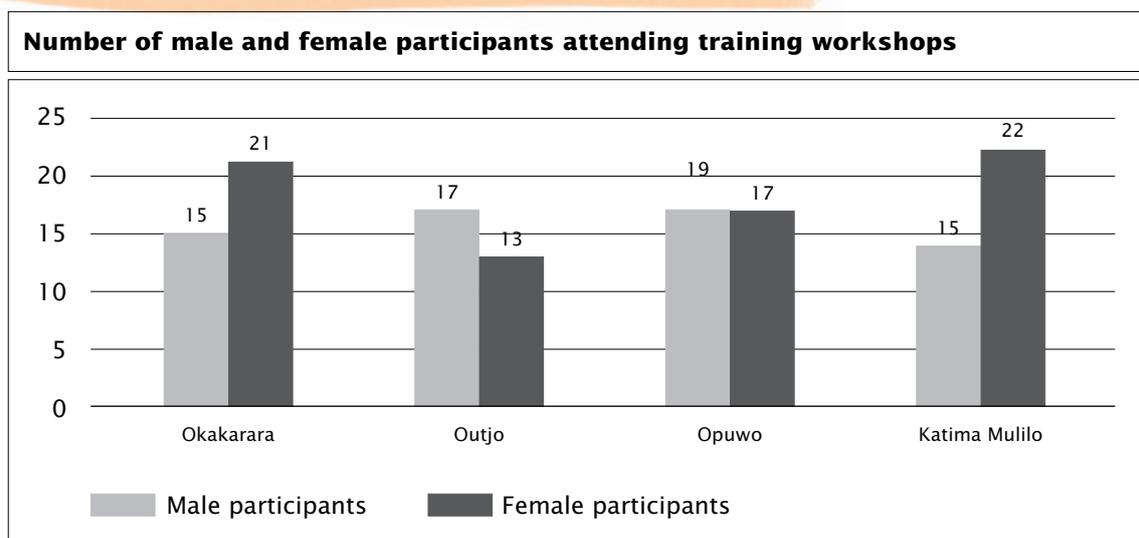
- DON'T offend the interviewee in any way.
- DON'T say things that are judgemental.
- DON'T interrupt in mid-sentence.
- DON'T put words in the interviewee's mouth.

Source: Adapted from www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

11 Data management

The data you have gathered should be organised for effective analysis and reporting. If you have decided to use a quantitative method of data gathering, e.g. surveys, your sample of respondents is large and the amount of data consequently very great, you might choose to use computer software to manage your data set. If you need to carry out this sophisticated analysis, you should enter the data into a computer programme. There are a number of software packages available to manage the data, including Excel (part of the Microsoft Office suite) and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Excel is the simplest of these programmes and should work well as database software. However, these computer programmes require a certain level of technical expertise.

Figure 1: Example of database software uses (Excel)



If you have sufficient funds available, the assistance of statisticians and computer experts can be engaged. In most cases, however, due to a lack of funds and expertise, you might opt to manually organise your data set.

12 Data analysis

When doing M & E, at some point you are going to find yourself dealing with a large amount of information. Thus, the next step is to make sense of it and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. **Data analysis** is the process of turning the mass of information you have gathered into meaningful patterns, trends and interpretations. Before analysing the data, you might review the goals and objectives of your evaluation. This will help you to organise the data and focus on your analysis. There are different approaches to analysing the data, depending on whether you are dealing with quantitative or qualitative data.

Data analysis of **quantitative data** involves the disaggregation of data into categories to provide evidence on achievements and to identify areas in which the project needs improvement. **Disaggregation** means breaking the data down into its constituent parts, for example by gender, social and economic situation, education, area of residence (urban/rural), marital status, age, and so on. The main advantage of quantitative data is that, through statistical analysis, it can be used to summarise the findings in a precise and reliable way.

However, a certain level of technical expertise is required. The most commonly used and uncomplicated statistics include the following:

- **Frequency counts** provide enumeration (record, account) of characteristics, activities or people.
- **Percentages** tell us the proportion of activities, things, or people that have certain characteristics within the total population of the sample. Percentages are the most commonly used statistics to show the current status, as well as growth over time.
- **Mean** is the most commonly used statistic to represent the average in research and evaluation studies. You divide the sum (total) of a group or category by the total number of units that make up that total.

Example for **frequency counts**:

A workshop was attended by 34 men and 23 women.

Example for **percentages**:

Among the participants in a workshop, there were 17 men and 23 women. This means that 42.5% of the participants were male, and 57.5% female.

($17 + 23 = 40$; $17/40 = 0.425$, i.e. 42.5%; $23/40 = 0.575$, i.e. 57.5%)

Example for **mean**:

Among the participants in a workshop were five males.

One male was 50 years old, one was 45, two were 42, and one was 31.

Thus, the average age (mean) of male participants was 42.

($50 + 45 + 42 + 42 + 31 = 210$; $210/5 = 42$)

As mentioned above, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data is the preferred model for evaluations. We cannot use statistics to analyse **qualitative data**, but such data help us to broaden our understanding of trends and patterns, and to enhance the depth and detail of analysis where needed. It is best to do the analysis of qualitative data in conjunction with the statistical analysis of related quantitative data as outlined above. To improve your analysis of qualitative data, you can follow these steps:

STEP 1: Carefully REVIEW the qualitative data and compare with the statistical analysis of the quantitative data.

STEP 2: ORGANISE comments made by respondents into similar categories, such as concerns, suggestions, complaints, recommendations, complaints, praise, and so on.

STEP 3: Identify PATTERNS or CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS (e.g. most people that raised concerns were in the same salary range or came from the same geographical area).

STEP 4: COMBINE the results of qualitative and quantitative data.

STEP 5: CATEGORISE the comments according to your sets of indicators.

Analysing information with **intuitive understanding**:

Determine key indicators.

Collect information around the indicators.

Develop a structure for your analysis, based on your INTUITIVE (instinctive, spontaneous) UNDERSTANDING of emerging themes and concerns.

Go through your data and organise it under the themes and concerns.

Identify patterns, trends and possible interpretations.

Write up your findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Source: www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

13 Report writing

As outlined in Section 4.2, an evaluation report is either formative (completed semi-annually or by mid-term) or summative (completed at the termination of the project). Either way, it makes sense to start with the preparation of the report well in advance. There are a number of sections that can be prepared by using material from the original proposal, e.g. the background section, baseline data, information on the project and the methodology. What has to be added are the evaluation findings, the conclusions and the recommendations. In order to avoid generating a great deal of information, however, it is worthwhile to organise evaluation data and field notes as soon as they are collected and to document experiences and observations while the project is still running.

In order to make your report **short** and **concise**, you should decide which data to include and which not to include. Your data should be classified according to a report outline, and you should always focus on your key evaluation questions, the indicators you are assessing and the type of information the recipient of the report requires. Your recommendations should include ways for improving the management of similar projects, as well as capacity-building needs, actions needed to increase the effectiveness of similar projects, and topics for future interventions and research.

You should always remember for whom the report is intended (e.g. donor agencies, project staff, stakeholders, the general public) and your presentation should be **interesting**, and **fine-tuned** to suit the needs of the target group. It should be written in direct, **uncomplicated language** that can also be understood by non-professionals.

Some **advice** on making a report **interesting to read**:

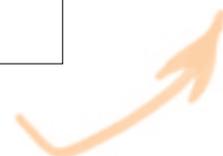
- The first sentence of every paragraph should make the main point; the remainder of the paragraph should supplement, substantiate (prove) or discuss this point.
- The shorter the text and the simpler the structure, the larger the number of people who will read it.
- Make the report interesting to read. Display your data in graphs, tables and illustrations. Digital pictures, direct quotes, short examples and comments help the reader to become familiar with the project and the conditions of its beneficiaries.

Source: Adapted from Nabris, Khalid (2002). *Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)*

Sometimes donor agencies provide guidelines and instructions for reports that should be submitted, in which case your report must be structured accordingly. Nevertheless, most reports follow a similar structure. Table 8 below gives you some useful suggestions on how to structure the report.

Table 8: Suggested structure of an evaluation report

Order	Contents
1. Title page	-
2. Table of contents	-
3. Acknowledgments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify those that contributed to the evaluation.
4. Executive summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarise the project evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation and the methods used, the major findings, and the recommendations in order of priority. This should be two to three pages that can be read independently, without reference to the rest of the report.
5. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elaborate on the project description and its background (problem analysis, objectives and strategies, funding). ▪ Summarise the evaluation context (purpose, strategies, composition of team, duration).
6. Evaluation objectives and methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List the evaluation objectives. ▪ Describe the evaluation methods. ▪ Identify limitations of the evaluation.
7. Findings and conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State findings clearly, with data presented graphically in tables and figures. ▪ Include the significance of the findings for the achievement of project objectives. ▪ Explain whether adequate progress was made (compare with baseline data). ▪ Identify reasons for accomplishments and failures, especially continuing constraints.
8. Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List recommendations for different kinds of users in order of priority (include approximate costs for implementing them, if possible.)



<p>8. Recommendations (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link recommendations explicitly with the findings, discussing their implications for decision-makers. ▪ Include an approximate timetable for implementing or reviewing recommendations.
<p>9. Lessons learned (optional)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify lessons learned from this evaluation for those planning, implementing or evaluating similar activities.
<p>10. Appendices</p>	<p>For reference purposes, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Terms of Reference (action plan describing objectives, results, activities and organisation of a specific project) ▪ Instruments used to collect data (e.g. copies of questionnaires) ▪ List of people interviewed and sites visited ▪ Data collection instruments ▪ Case studies ▪ Acronyms/abbreviations/ initialisms (Note: These are often included before the main Contents page. ▪ Any related literature ▪ Other data/tables not included in the chapter on findings

Source: Adapted from Nabris, Khalid (2002). *Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)*

14 Improving performance

The M & E report that we submit to our donors highlights strengths and weaknesses of our project implementation. For us, it is important to know whether or not we have achieved our goals and objectives. Furthermore, we should also use the results to prepare an action plan to implement follow-up activities. Thus, M & E provide new baseline data for future planning. M & E reports reflect the situation of our beneficiaries at the conclusion of the project and highlight required follow-up activities. As a result, recommendations can be used to design new projects or interventions or to further develop running programmes. Evaluation can, thus, be used to obtain further support for your NGO/CSO and to raise funds from donors – especially if the results of the evaluation confirm that the project goals remain valid.

Furthermore, the M & E report can be used as a tool for advocacy. Results of the evaluation can be discussed with stakeholders on the national, regional and local levels. Evaluations have the potential to explore policy implications and point to possible actions and changes.



Once you have the **conclusions** and **recommendations** resulting from your M & E report, you should:

- report to the donors and to stakeholders;
- learn from the overall process;
- make effective decisions about how to move forward; and
- if necessary, deal with resistance to the necessary changes within your organisation, or even among donors and stakeholders.

Source: Adapted from www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

Remember that you do not perform this exercise to please your donors – rather, learning should be the primary motivation for undertaking M & E. You will empower yourself and your colleagues by learning what works and what does not, what you are doing right and what you are doing wrong. NGOs and CSOs that do not learn and that fail to question what they are actually doing will in all probability stagnate.

Please remember that not everyone will be pleased about the changes you intend to make. People often **resist change** because:

- they do not want to be pushed out of their “comfort zone”;
- they feel judged;
- they do not like to rush into change;
- they sometimes do not have long-term commitment either to the project in question or your organisation as a whole; and/or
- they might feel that they cannot cope with the proposed changes.

You can help them to **accept changes** by:

- making the reasons why change is needed very clear;
- helping people to see the whole picture;
- focusing on key issues;
- recognising anger, fear and resistance;
- encouraging an attitude that change can be exciting; and
- emphasising the importance of everyone being committed to making it work.

Source: Adapted from www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

Sources

Hopwood, Graham, Justine Hunter & Doris Kellner (2007). The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Electoral Process in Namibia. Pretoria: Institute for Democracy in South Africa

Nabris, Khalid (2002). Monitoring & Evaluation. Based on a PASSIA Training Course. Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI). Building Capacity for Effective Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation. Presented by Oliver Seale and Marisa Labuschagne at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI). Collecting Data for Monitoring and Evaluation. Presented by Ros Hirschowitz at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

National Treasury South Africa. Integrating Performance Measurement (M&E) in the Planning Process Using Results-Based Management – A Case Study. Presented by Shanil Haricharan at the InWEnt First Regional and Interdisciplinary Alumni-Conference, held 11th to 14th November 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Tanaka, Sugumi. The Urban Governance Index. A Tool to Measure the Quality of Urban Governance. InWEnt Course on Measuring Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, conducted 16th to 27th June 2008 in Windhoek, Namibia

The World Bank (2004). Monitoring & Evaluation. Some Tools, Methods & Approaches. Washington D.C.: The World Bank

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2004). Programme Manager's Planning Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit. Tool Number 4: Stakeholder Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation www.unfpa.org/monitoring/toolkit.htm (accessed 9th October 2008)

United Nations Children's' Fund (UNICEF) (1991). A UNICEF Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation: Making a Difference? New York: UNICEF

www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf (accessed 31st July 2008)



Appendix

Exercises

Exercise 1

Select a project your NGO/CSO is currently implementing and that you, as project manager, are responsible for. Answer the following questions:

- Do the activities that you have been undertaking correspond with those declared in the project proposal? If not, why have there been changes?
- Are your organisation's personnel who are responsible for activities related to the project doing a good job? If not, why not?
- Is your project moving towards the goals and objectives outlined in the proposal? If not, why not?
- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of your project?

Exercise 2

Predict the possible outcome and the possible impact of the project referred to in Exercise 1. Try to establish a causal link between its outcome and impact by explaining how you would implement:

- the pre-test – post-test model; and
- the comparison group model.

Exercise 3

Identify/comment on your project's possible:

- efficiency;
- effectiveness;
- impact;
- relevance; and
- sustainability.

Exercise 4

Apply the logical framework matrix structure to a project your NGO/CSO is currently implementing. Identify the different levels of the matrix and select MoVs, assumptions and risks for each level, namely:

- goal;
- purpose;
- objective;
- output; and
- activities.

Exercise 5

Establish three main indicators to measure the achievements of your project. With reference to these indicators, consider which data sources are easily accessible for your NGO/CSO. Distinguish between indicators relating to:

- input;
- output;
- outcome; and
- impact.

Exercise 6

Choose two methods of data collection that should to be appropriate for the project you are implementing. Bear in mind the funds available and the human resources and technical expertise present in your organisation. Select options that seem to be reasonable and practical.

Exercise 7

Design a performance measurement framework for your organisation:

	Indicators	Sources of data	Collection method	Frequency	Responsibility
Outcome					
Output					
Activities					
Input					

Exercise 8

Collect baseline information by using indicators:

Indicator	Data Source	Data collection method	Who will collect the data (appoint a staff member)	Frequency of collection (how often or when)	Costs of data collection (in N\$)	Difficulty in collecting data (high, medium or low)	Who will analyse the data and write the report (appoint a staff member)

