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**TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SENIOR STAFF OF THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS**

***PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT AS TOOLS FOR
QUALITY POLICYMAKING IN EDUCATION***

Module 4:

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

25-27 of October, 2007

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Law of project management No.4

*"When things are going well, something will
go wrong. When things can't get any worse,
they will. When things appear to be going
better, you have overlooked something ...*

Murphy was an optimist!"



Module V

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Aim: Assemble elements of a coherent monitoring and evaluation system for development projects.

Competences:

- Design monitoring and evaluation tools for development projects
- Define criteria for project performance and formulate indicators of success
- Identify most appropriate mechanisms to use monitoring and evaluation as learning tools for continuous improvement
- Use evaluation data to formulate policy and influence decision-making

Content outline:

- Monitoring system and tools. Role of monitoring and reporting procedures on project activities.
- Project performance evaluation
- Continuous improvement of project development and implementation
- Capitalization and sustainability
- Feeding in the policy process: how to use assessment reports to inform policymaking and influence decisions

TIMETABLE

Day 1, 25th of October

TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 10.30	Monitoring and evaluation in the context of Project Management
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 13.00	Making sense of concepts and functions in project monitoring end evaluation
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 16.00	Project monitoring (1). Setting up a monitoring system
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 18.00	Project monitoring (2). Tools for monitoring
19.00 –	Dinner

Day 2, 26th of October

TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 10.30	Project reporting – functions, type of reports, use of reports
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 13.00	Project evaluation (1). Main principles
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 16.00	Project evaluation (2). Evaluation process
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 18.00	Monitoring and evaluation as management tools and quality assurance mechanisms
19.00 –	Dinner

Day 3, 27th of October

TIME	SESSION
09.00 – 11.00	Applications on project monitoring
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 13.15	Applications of project evaluation
13.15 –	Lunch
15.00	END OF THE WORKSHOP

Introduction to M&E in the context of project management

One of the key stages in the lifecycle of a project is monitoring and evaluation. Regarding these two management responsibilities, there are different conceptions and approaches, but a common core knowledge base can be captured for operational purposes of better operating in a project environment.

Project monitoring and evaluation supports improving the performance and attaining the expected results. M&E have as objective performance measuring and evaluation for ensuring a better management of outputs and outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation help improve performance and achieve results. More precisely, the overall purpose of monitoring and evaluation is the measurement and assessment of performance in order to more effectively manage the outcomes and outputs known as development results. Performance is defined as progress towards and achievement of results.



Source: UNDP – Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results

Traditionally, monitoring and evaluation focused on assessing inputs and implementation processes. Today, the focus is on assessing the contributions of various factors to a given development outcome, with such factors including outputs, partnerships, policy advice and dialogue, advocacy and brokering/coordination.

M&E is not a substitute for good project management, but could be an essential tool in the hands of the project managers to maximize quality and impact of the

project. For M&E to succeed, it needs to be driven by managers' needs for information and their desire to create a learning environment in the project.

Usually, inadequate M&E has two consequences:

- *Limited learning* by implementers about the project's progress, opportunities and problems; consequently, the limited ability of those involved to correct operations and strategy, leading to sub-optimal impact of the project as a whole.
- *Unclear impact performance*, so limited accountability to funding agencies and to primary stakeholders of project in terms of their stated goals.

In the **EU PCM Guidelines** the monitoring is approached in a broader framework, together with review and reporting.

Monitoring, review and reporting are core management responsibilities, which involve the collection, analysis, communication and use of information on the physical and financial progress of the project and the achievement of results.

Monitoring, review and reporting support, *inter alia*:

- Identification of successes and problems during project implementation
- Informed and timely decision making by project managers to support implementation
- Accountability for the resources used and results achieved
- Stakeholder awareness and participation; and
- The evaluation of project achievements and audit of activities and finances

Conceptual clarifications

Monitoring

Monitoring is the continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to agreed schedules, and of the use of inputs, infrastructure, and services by project beneficiaries. It is an integral part of good management by a project implementing agency. Its main objectives are to provide continuous feedback on implementation, and to identify actual or potential successes and problems as early as possible to facilitate timely adjustments to project operation. The creation or strengthening of monitoring activities under a project is (...) an institution-building component which should permanently improve overall management practice within borrower agencies.

(WB – Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Operational Directive)

Monitoring helps continual self-evaluation by providing data to generate insights through formal and informal processes. Formal monitoring involves gathering data about chosen indicators and performance questions. Informal monitoring is about valuing and sharing impressions from chats with stakeholders and from observations in the field. Monitoring focuses on regular information-gathering and the frequent checking of short-term progress, with analysis about implications for the project.

(IFAD – Managing for impact in Rural Development. A guide for Project M&E)

Monitoring can be defined as a continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results. An ongoing intervention might be a project, programme or other kind of support to an outcome.

(UNDP – Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results)

Monitoring involves the collection, analysis, communication and use of information about the project's progress. Monitoring systems and procedures should provide the mechanism by which relevant information is provided to the right people at the right time to help them make informed decisions. Monitoring should highlight strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and enable responsible personnel to deal with problems, improve performance, build on successes and adapt to changing circumstances.

Monitoring is systematic and continuous collection, analysis and use of management information to support effective decision-making. Monitoring is an internal management responsibility, although it may be complemented by 'external' monitoring inputs.

(EU PCM Guidelines)

Evaluation

Evaluation is the periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact (both expected and unexpected) of the project in relation to stated objectives.

There are essentially three types. An *interim evaluation* is undertaken by project management during implementation as a first review of progress and a prognosis of the likely effects of the project. It is intended to identify project design

problems, and is essentially an internal activity undertaken for project management.

Terminal evaluation, a similar process undertaken at the end of a project, includes an assessment of the project's effects and their potential sustainability. A third type, impact evaluation, is usually undertaken several years after final disbursement, and measures changes attributable to the project in terms of both direct and indirect causality.

This is normally undertaken by national authorities or donor agencies.

(WB – Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Operational Directive)

Evaluation, in its broadest sense, simply means “to assess or judge the value or worth of something”. In practice, this means that implementers need a questioning attitude for continual assessment. Evaluation events are often more periodic and ask more fundamental questions about the overall progress and direction of a project. Self-evaluation processes combine well with external evaluations.

(IFAD – Managing for impact in Rural Development. A guide for Project M&E)

Evaluation is a selective exercise that attempts to systematically and objectively assess progress towards and the achievement of an outcome. Evaluation is not a one-time event, but an exercise involving assessments of differing scope and depth carried out at several points in time in response to evolving needs for evaluative knowledge and learning during the effort to achieve an outcome. All evaluations—even project evaluations that assess relevance, performance and other criteria—need to be linked to outcomes as opposed to only implementation or immediate outputs.

UNDP – Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results)

Evaluation can be distinguished from monitoring and regular review by:

- Its scope (broader – being concerned with whether or not the right objectives and strategies were chosen)
- Its timing (less frequent – usually at completion or ex-post)
- Those involved (will usually involve ‘external/independent’ personnel to provide objectivity); and
- The users of the results (including planners and policy makers concerned with strategic policy and programming issues, rather than just managers responsible for implementing the tasks in hand).

(EU PCM Guidelines)

A. MONITORING

Key steps in developing a project based monitoring system

According to PCM Guidelines there are six main stages that need to be covered when developing a project based monitoring system.

These are:

1. Clarify project scope – stakeholders, institutional capacity, project objectives and resources
2. Understand the nature of organizational relationships, management arrangements and capacity constraints
3. Determine the information needs of project implementers and other key stakeholders
4. Review existing information collection systems and procedures
5. As appropriate, develop and document monitoring system guidelines and formats
6. Provide training and resources to support systems development and implementation

CONDUCTING GOOD MONITORING – some principles

The credibility of findings and assessments depends to a large extent on the manner in which monitoring and evaluation is conducted. Good principles (also called “minimum standards”) for monitoring are for instance identified by UNDP (Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results):

- Good monitoring focuses on **results and follow-up**. It looks for “what is going well” and “what is not progressing” in terms of progress towards intended results. It then records this in reports, makes recommendations and follows-up with decisions and action.
- Good monitoring depends to a large measure on **good design**. If a project is poorly designed or based on faulty assumptions, even the best monitoring is unlikely to ensure its success. Particularly important is the design of a realistic results chain of outcome, outputs and activities. Project staff should avoid using monitoring for correcting recurring problems that need permanent solutions.
- Good monitoring requires **regular visits** by staff who focus on results and follow-up to verify and validate progress. In addition, the Programme Manager must organize visits and/or bilateral meetings dedicated to assessing progress, looking at the big picture and analyzing problem

areas. The Programme Manager ensures continuous documentation of the achievements and challenges **as they occur** and does not wait until the last moment to try to remember what happened.

- **Regular analysis of reports** is another minimum standard for good monitoring. Such reports, prepared by Project Management or other partners, serve as a basis for analysis and further intervention.
- Monitoring also benefits from the use of **participatory monitoring mechanisms** to ensure commitment, ownership, follow-up and feedback on performance. This is indispensable for outcome monitoring where progress cannot be assessed without some knowledge of what partners are doing. Participatory mechanisms include outcome groups, stakeholder meetings, steering committees and focus group interviews.

ANALYSING DATA FROM MONITORING

Monitoring process is to a great extent about collecting data, and then analyzing and transforming it for management use. The situation is that quite often information is collected and then wasted because of inadequate processing or reluctance of the management team to use it.

In the PCM Guidelines a series of information analysis methods are provided, in the attempt to create a balance between using quantitative and qualitative information.

Type of analysis	Description
Planned vs actual	Monitoring is primarily about comparing what was originally planned with what actually happens. This analysis should therefore form the base of any monitoring, review and reporting system. For example, if we learn from administrative records that 1,500 primary school teachers have received an 'improved package' of in-service training, we need to know how this compares to what was planned in order to make an assessment of performance. If the plan was to provide training for 3,000 teachers, and all the resources/costs originally budgeted have been applied/spent, this would then indicate a problem either with implementation performance, and/or with the original plan and budget. Planners and managers would need to analyse the causes of the problem and determine an appropriate course of remedial action.
Percentages/ratios	Calculating percentages and ratios is a particularly useful way of presenting performance information. Assuming that the planned targets are reasonably accurate/realistic, such ratios help us see how close we are to achieving what we originally intended. If for example we are comparing planned with actual performance, low percentage figures immediately highlight areas of potential concern and should trigger an analysis of cause and subsequent decisions on taking remedial action.
Trends over time and comparisons between periods	<p>An analysis of available data over different time periods can be extremely useful in revealing how the project is performing. This can help us to see whether things are getting 'better' or 'worse' (i.e in immunization coverage rates), and allows seasonal variability to be identified.</p> <p>Comparison with previous periods can also be useful when there are no clear current targets for the activity being monitored or reviewed. Reference to what happened at the same time in previous periods/years can at least then provide an indication of what results might reasonably be expected.</p> <p>When analysing trends over time it is important to remember that one must compare 'like with like'. The use of a consistent set of indicators (measuring the same thing in the same way at different points in time) is therefore essential.</p>
Geographic variance	Projects which are being implemented (or providing support) in a number of different locations can be monitored in such a way that geographic variations in performance can be identified. Aggregate service delivery or 'outcome' indicators may show results that accord generally with planned targets, but not reveal location specific problems that need to be addressed. An analysis of data from different districts, provinces or regions may therefore reveal issues requiring management attention.
Group variance	<p>As with geographic variance, it may be important to monitor variance in outcomes between different social groups. For example, an important concern for many projects will be the impact of the project on both women and men. This requires that data be disaggregated by gender and this then be systematically analysed on a regular basis. It is also important to investigate if the project is including specific vulnerable groups, including the disabled (i.e in terms of building design).</p> <p>Poverty alleviation projects will also be concerned with identifying which groups within the community are benefiting from project interventions. A rural credit project, for example, which targets low income farmers or female headed households should be collecting data which will allow the client profile to be analysed.</p>
Work-norms and standards	Many service delivery activities can be usefully monitored by establishing, and then collecting information on, work-norms or standards. For example – an agency's response time to requests for assistance, waiting lists for minor surgery, the number of prisoners held on remand and the duration of their detention before sentencing, or pupil/teacher ratios – can all be analysed and compared with agreed work norms or standards to help managers measure performance and identify where improvements might need to be made.

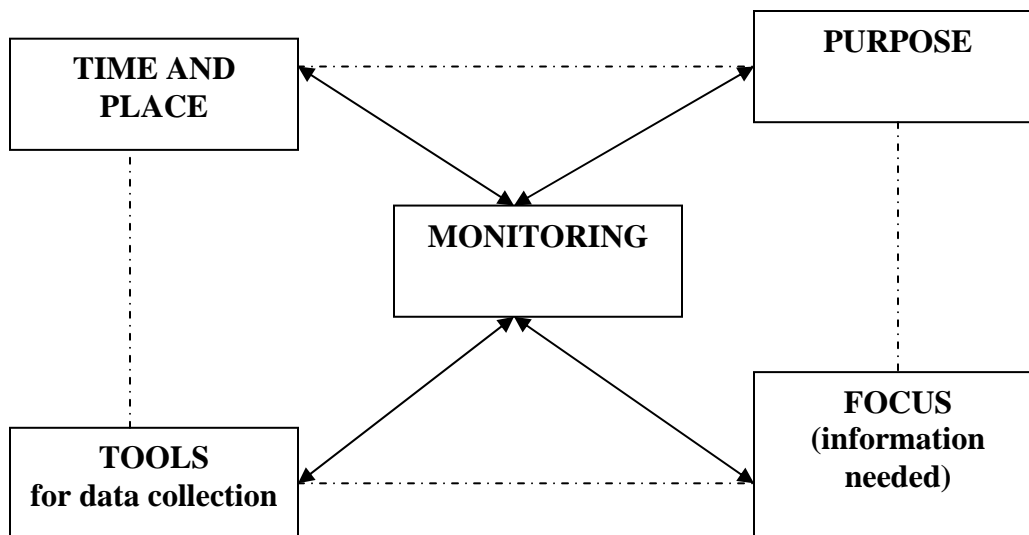
Some examples of monitoring tools

A wide variety of tools are regularly used to produce monitoring information and to support the project management process. They could be used alone or in different combinations to serve the purpose.

a. Field monitoring visits

This is a very commonly used mechanism for project monitoring and conducting regular field visits is a common practice in project work.

Special consideration should be given to timing of the visit, purpose and needed information (what to look for).



In order to be efficient in a field visit, this should be well planned in advance, having clarified all key aspects listed in the diagram above. A checklist for better planning could help keeping the whole visit organized and focused.

Time and place:

- *When – date(s)*
- *Where – place(s)*
- *How long – duration*
- *Timetable / agenda*

Purpose:

- *Define purpose of the monitoring visit*
- *Establish results at the end of the visit*
- *Set up monitoring report requirements*
- *Decide what to do with what you get*

Tools:

- *Develop tools for data collection (checklists, interview protocols, observation sheets etc.)*
- *Define information analysis methods*

Focus:

- *Key issues to be followed / researched*
- *Key documents to be requested / produced*
- *Identify critical incidents*

b. Regular / milestone / progress reports

A huge diversity of reports were framed and developed over the years, in the frame of project work. Different institutions, agencies, donors have their special requests and standards in this respect.

The EC is using mainly the reports described below:

Report type	Summary description
<i>An inception report (including first annual plan)</i>	<p>An inception report is highly recommended for all projects. It should usually be produced within 3 months after the launch of the project (funding release and key staff in place).</p> <p>An inception report provides the opportunity for project managers to review the design in consultation with stakeholders, update the first annual workplan to ensure its relevance and feasibility and build both management and other stakeholder commitment to, and 'ownership' of, the project. This is particularly important in situations where much of the design work has been undertaken by 'others' (i.e not the team now tasked with its implementation) and when the design has been prepared some time in the past (there may in some cases be a time gap of more than a year between finishing a feasibility study and financing proposal and the commencement of project implementation).</p>
<i>Progress reports</i>	<p>Progress reports must be produced by implementing partners/project managers on a regular basis (as specified in the Agreement with the EC). Overburdening project managers with reporting requirements should nevertheless be avoided, and report formats and timing should take account of/build on existing systems rather than duplicate them. As a formal requirement, it is often best to require such reporting no more than quarterly, and six-monthly may be more appropriate.</p>

	<p>EC Task Managers must prepare regular summary reports/updates on each project (every 4 months) through the 'Implementation Report' window of the Common Relex Information System (CRIS). This provides a summary of each project's status in a standard format that is accessible to RELEX staff.</p>
<p><i>Annual plan and progress report</i></p>	<p>Annual plans are required for every multi-year project. The timing of annual reports should ideally fit with the local planning and budgeting calendar, rather than the donors.</p> <p>Annual reports should focus on documenting progress towards delivering planned results and achieving the project purpose. Comparison against the original project design (or as updated by the inception report) and the last annual workplan should be provided.</p> <p>The annual report should not only focus on what the project itself has achieved (or not), but also on any significant changes in the 'external' environment. It should also provide an overview of prospects for the sustainability of benefits.</p> <p>The annual report also includes an updated annual plan for the next year. This provided the opportunity for project implementers to re-schedule results, activities and resource requirements in light of experience gained/lessons learned.</p> <p>A clear Executive Summary should be provided, specifically addressing the decisions and actions required from relevant stakeholders.</p>
<p><i>A final/completion report</i></p>	<p>A completion report is required at the end of the project financing period. Given that only a small proportion of all projects are formally evaluated (ex-post), the completion report may be the last opportunity to document and comment on overall achievements against the original plan, prospects for sustainability of benefits, highlight lessons learned and make recommendations on any follow-up actions required.</p>

c. Analysis of administrative and management records

Every project management is requested to keep record of some administrative documents, which most of the time are used periodically in drafting different management reports.

- Financial information related to expenditures, incomes, cash flow etc.
- Staffing in the project, with roles and responsibilities, reporting requirements, qualifications and training etc.
- Asset records, procurement and inventory of goods / equipments.
- Service delivery information (no. of training delivered, no. of teachers qualified, no. of schools rehabilitated etc.).

Normally, keeping administrative record is part of the project routine and does not demand too much creativity in development. The most important thing is to be organized and constant in collecting these information.

Key questions to ask when reviewing the content and quality of administrative records include:

- Are appropriate records being kept, and are they up to date?
- Are those responsible for keeping the records clear about their responsibilities and the record keeping procedures/systems?
- Are record keeping systems and procedures appropriately documented (i.e in a Manual/Guideline)?
- Is the quality of information periodically checked and verified?
- Is an appropriate level/type of training in record keeping systems provided to staff?
- Is appropriate technology being used to record, analyse and report information?
- Are adequate resources available to support effective record keeping and information management?
- Are records and reports securely stored and easily retrieved?
- Is the information summarised and reported on a regular basis, and is it then made available to managers/decision makers in a clear and usable format?
- Is the information presented in a timely manner, and is it used by managers to help them make informed decisions?

d. Meeting reports

As it is the case with the reports, same applies to regular meetings, demanded by the type of project being implemented. Usually, the scope of these meeting could be:

- Review the status and prospects of the projects
- Presenting a milestone report
- Exchange information among project stakeholders
- Solve problems / critical incidents
- Forward planning
- Approval of reports / endorsement of recommendations etc.

Normally, every meeting of this kind should have a report / minute / aide memoir which could provide important information for monitoring purposes.

Monitoring process could be conceived as being more close to 'independent' approach, closer to evaluation of what is being done, but there are evidences that a learning based approach, where monitoring is often combined with *process consultancy* bring significant benefits.

B. EVALUATION

Project / program evaluation became lately a highly specialized and developed science and field of activity, in the same time.

There is a whole knowledge base on program evaluation, according to different theories, approaches etc.

As a consequence of the movement towards results-based management principles and practices, evaluation is more and more focused on outcomes, on the actual performance of the program / project.

Functions and criteria for evaluation

A distinction should be made between:

- The **scope** of the evaluation – underlying merits and drawbacks of the project
- The **functions** of the evaluation – the modality of use / valuing information produced by evaluation (to inform stakeholders, to support management / decision making, to offer data for further interventions etc.).

Generally, there are two essential functions defining project evaluation:

- **Accountability** function, referring to determination of the quality of the project and who is responsible for that quality;
- **Management** function, offering recommendations / solutions for project continuous improvement.

We remind at this point that in the EU PCM Guidelines a *quality framework* is developed, based on three quality assessment criteria, operationalized then at the level of every step of the PM Cycle.

A	Relevant <i>The project meets demonstrated and high priority needs</i>	B	Feasible <i>The project is well designed and will deliver sustainable benefits to target groups</i>	C	Effective & well managed <i>The project is delivering the anticipated benefits and is being well managed</i>
1	Consistent with, and supportive of, EC development and cooperation policies	6	The objectives (Overall objective, purpose and results) and the work programme (activities) are clear and logical, and address clearly identified needs	12	The project remains relevant and feasible
2	Consistent with, and supportive of, Partner Government policies and relevant sector programmes ¹⁷	7	The resource and cost implications are clear, the project is financially viable and has a positive economic return	13	Project objectives are being achieved
3	Key stakeholders and target groups are clearly identified, equity and institutional capacity issues analysed, and local ownership demonstrated	8	Coordination, management and financing arrangements are clear and support institutional strengthening and local ownership	14	The project is being well managed by those directly responsible for implementation
4	Problems have been appropriately analysed	9	The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and audit arrangements are clear and practical	15	Sustainability issues are being effectively addressed
5	Lessons learned from experience and linkages with other ongoing/planned projects/programmes have been assessed and incorporated into strategy selection	10	Assumptions/Risks are identified and appropriate risk management arrangements are in place	16	Good practice principles of project management are applied by EC Task Managers
		11	The project is environmentally, technically and socially sound and sustainable		

Accompanying this, a list of criteria for evaluation were also developed, and we remind them below:

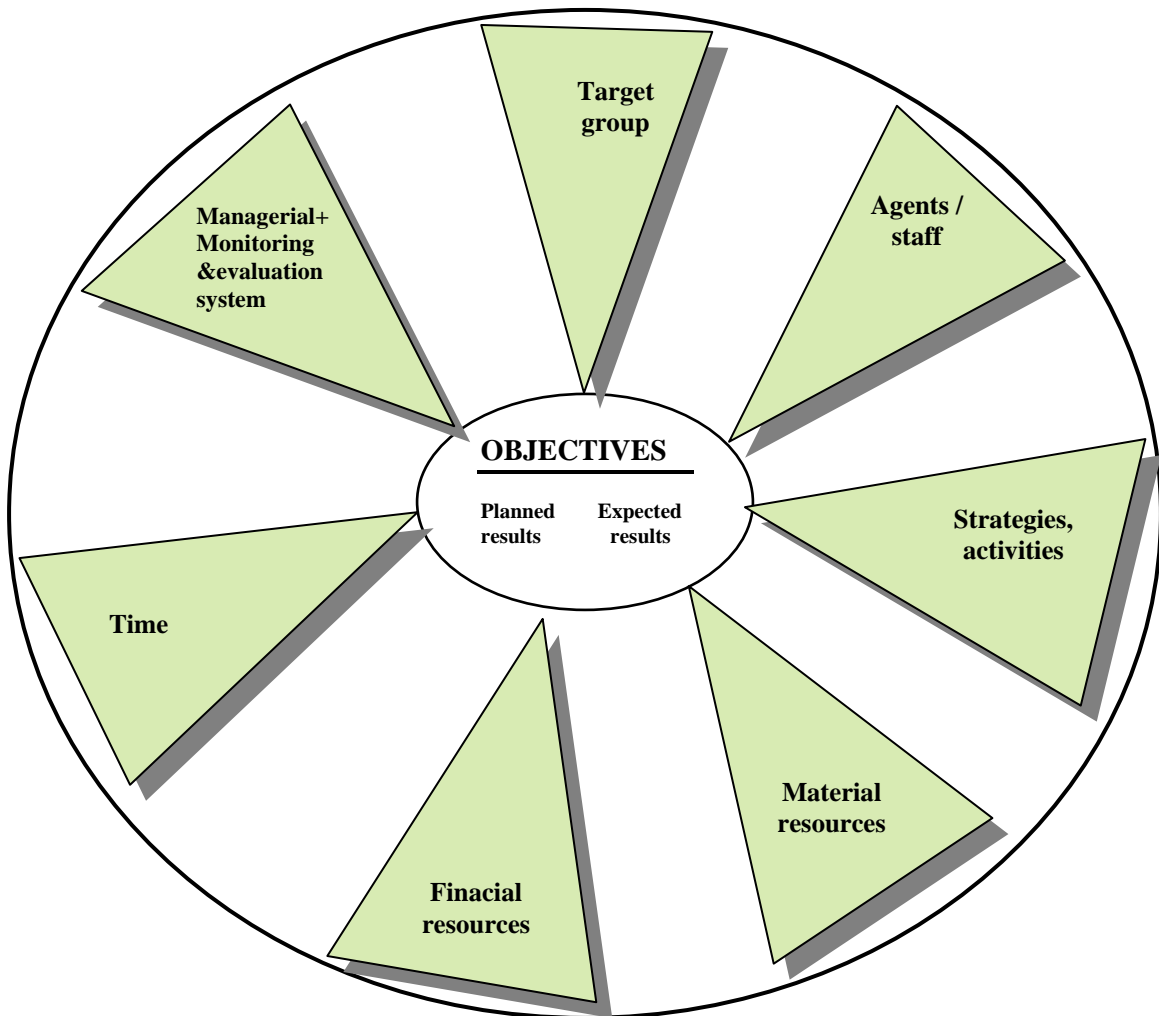
- Relevance** The appropriateness of project objectives to the problems that it was supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operated, and including an assessment of the quality of project preparation and design – i.e. the logic and completeness of the project planning process, and the internal logic and coherence of the project design.
- Efficiency** The fact that the Results have been achieved at reasonable cost, i.e. how well inputs/means have been converted into Results, in terms of quality, quantity and time, and the quality of the Results achieved. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.
- Effectiveness** An assessment of the contribution made by Results to achievement of the Project Purpose, and how Assumptions have affected project achievements.
- Impact** The effect of the project on its wider environment, and its contribution to the wider sectoral objectives summarised in the project's Overall Objectives, and on the achievement of the overarching policy objectives of the EC.

Sustainability

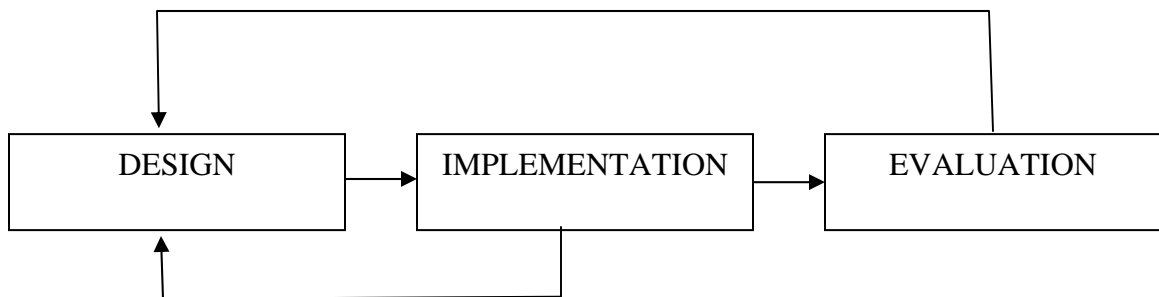
An assessment of the likelihood of benefits produced by the project to continue to flow after external funding has ended, and with particular reference to factors of ownership by beneficiaries, policy support, economic and financial factors, socio-cultural aspects, gender equality, appropriate technology, environmental aspects, and institutional and management capacity.

Structural versus process approach in project evaluation

In the evaluation process, the focus could be on structural components of the project (one or more), identified in the model below:



Evaluation could also take as a target one or more of the main phases in the evolution of a project.



Evaluation involved in the construction of the project (i.e. needs assessment)

Evaluation of the quality of the project (quality of the proposal / paper)

Evaluation of the congruence between specifications of the project and its effective implementation

Formative assessments for optimizing implementation and for suggesting possible revisions

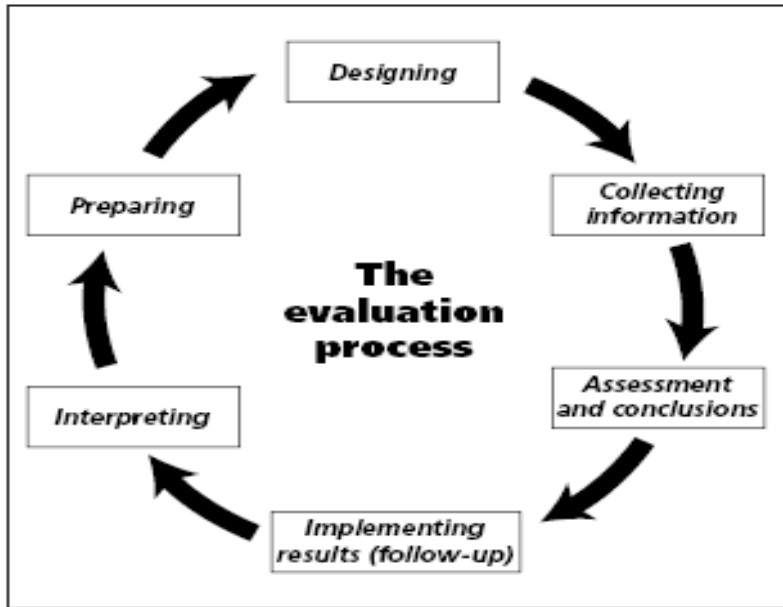
Impact assessment

Evaluation of customers' satisfaction

Regardless type and focus, structure and duration etc., important is to see evaluation as integrative part of the project and not something 'external'. Evaluation has a key learning function for the stakeholders involved in project planning, development and implementation.

Evaluation process lifecycle

Evaluation is a process in itself, having its own life-cycle as shown in the figure below, suggested by the Project Management T-Kit of the Council of Europe;



Preparing

Preparing the evaluation is first of all setting its aims and purpose: why is the evaluation necessary? Who needs it? Who should be involved in doing it?

Designing

Once we are clear what the purpose of the evaluation is, we need to define its objectives, namely what is going to be evaluated (the use of resources, the educational methods, the results, the impact, etc.). These objectives will determine the indicators or criteria (qualitative, quantitative) and the time when evaluation should start.

Collecting the information

The indicators and criteria being established, the next process is actually getting the information (data) needed (how many people participated, what did they learn, what did they do afterwards, etc.). The criteria and the objectives will determine the way of collecting the information (written records, interviews, during the project or after, etc.).

Interpreting the information

What does the data and information that we possess mean? The interpretation, like the stages that follow reflect the most difficult challenge in evaluation: objectivity. Reality can always be interpreted in different ways and people can also influence the evaluation by their own interests and concerns. An awareness of the need to be objective is nevertheless essential.

Interpretation can be made easier (and showing the path to the conclusions) if the information can be compared with other experiences of the same nature.

Assessing and conclusions

The assessment is actually the process of drawing the relevant conclusions out of the information acquired. It is looking for the reasons for what happened, highlighting the results and putting them into perspective with the original aims and objectives of the project.

Implementing results

All the information and the conclusions drawn from it are, in a way, meaningless if nothing is done with them. The function of evaluation towards social change is lost if there is no desire to change, to admit the results of an evaluation, etc. The sources of resistance to change are many (institutional, personal, political, etc.).

The same document provides interesting tips in the format of *dos* and *donts* in the evaluation process:

DO:

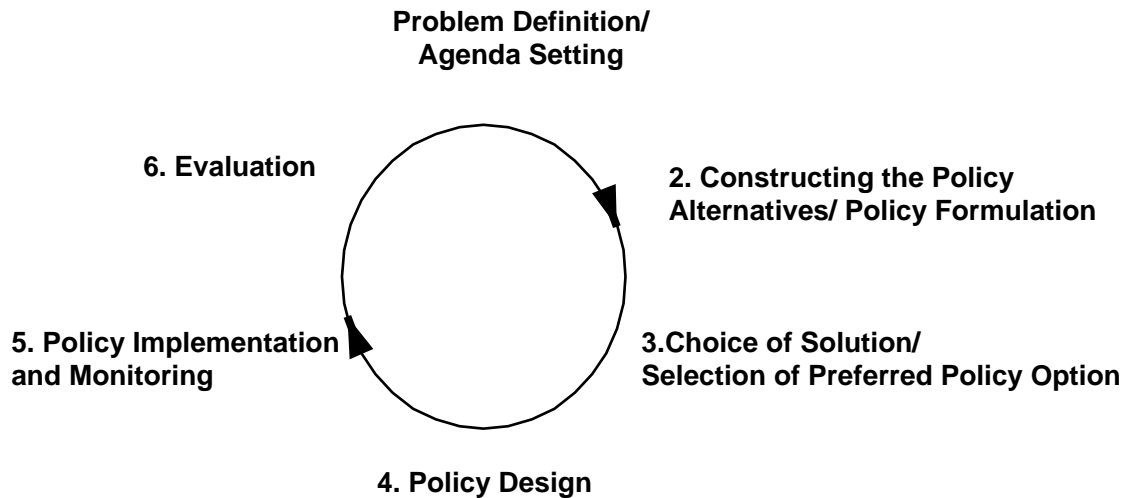
- Involve different people in the evaluation, and take them seriously
- Look at results of similar projects. Are there any trends or things that can be compared?
- Recall the original needs analysis, aims and objectives.
- Remember that there is no such thing as an 'objective' evaluation. But you may limit the level of subjectivity (by diversifying sources and methods).
- Run through the results and impact of the project with the young people. This way you will help them understand the change in them.
- Think about the evaluation while planning and running the project (not only towards the end!)
- Show possible discrepancies or differences of opinion in matters where there is no clear conclusion or data.
- Expect to be misunderstood!

DON'T:

- Get stuck in the negativity of some evaluations. Do bear in mind that many people still believe that evaluating is stating what did not work or what went wrong. Honesty does not mean not highlighting the positive aspects (especially to sponsors)
- Use the evaluation as a way to sort out conflicts (although it can be a starting point...).
- Feel attacked if some things did not go exactly as you planned or felt. Respect the other people's evaluation.
- Keep the results for yourself!
- Focus on what can not be changed; focus on areas where change is possible.
- Run an evaluation without planning it first.

Evidence-based policy-making (EBP). How to use monitoring and evaluation results

Policy cycle – short recap



Within the framework of any good policy design and implementation plan, a comprehensive evaluation procedure is essential in determining the effectiveness of the implemented policy and in providing the basis for future decision-making. In designing a policy evaluation plan, government agencies and delivery organizations need to consider how the policy objectives can be accurately and effectively measured and how the evaluation data collected will be used as a basis for decision-making.

The evaluation process consists of looking at the particular public policy in practice, both in terms of objectives and means employed. It will probably involve a broad group of people including bureaucrats, politicians as well as non-governmental agencies and other stakeholders.

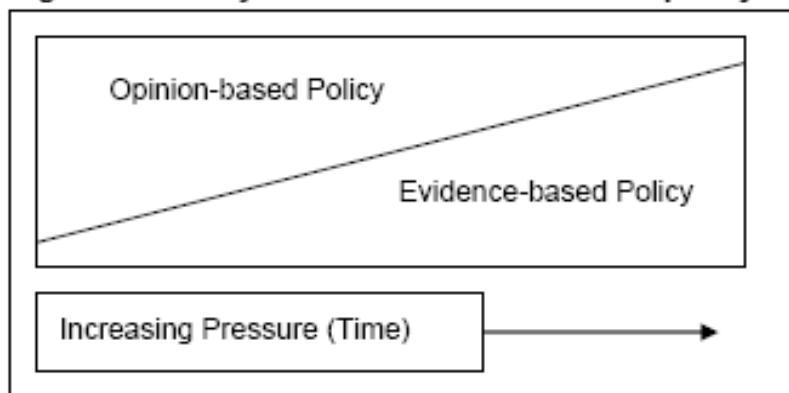
As can be seen from the circular and iterative nature of the policy cycle, following the evaluation stage any of the following may be reconsidered: the problem, the chosen policy option, the policy design or implementation. This means that the issue may be put back on the agenda, put back to another stage of the process or may continue to be implemented in the same way.

(Young, Quinn, 2001).

What is EBP?

EBP is an approach that 'helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation' (Davies, 2004: 3). EBP is a discourse or set of methods which informs the policy process, rather than one which aims directly to affect the eventual goals of the policy. It advocates a more rational, rigorous and systematic approach. The pursuit of EBP is based on the premise that policy decisions should be better informed by available evidence, and should include rational analysis. This is because policy and practice which are based on systematic evidence are seen to produce better outcomes. The desired progression is showed in Figure 1 below. As Davies notes (ibid) 'The diagram shows a shift away from opinion based policies being replaced by a more rigorous, rational approach that gathers, critically appraises and uses high quality research evidence to inform policymaking and professional practice.'

Figure 1: The dynamics of evidence-based policy



From: *A Toolkit for Progressive Policymakers in Developing Countries* (Sophie Sutcliffe and Julius Court), January 2006

Results of project evaluation, especially ex-post evaluation reports, could and should be a solid basis for policymakers in shaping their decisions.

PROFESSIONAL POLICY MAKING – CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Forward looking** – takes a long term view, based on statistical trends and informed predictions, of the likely impact of policy
- **Outward looking** – takes account of factors in the national, European and international situation and communicates policy effectively
- **Innovative and creative** – questions established ways of dealing with things and encourages new ideas; open to comments and suggestions of others
- **Using evidence** – uses best available evidence from a wide range of sources and involves key stakeholders at an early stage
- **Inclusive** – takes account of the impact on the needs of all those directly or indirectly affected by the policy
- **Joined up** – looks beyond institutional boundaries to the Government's strategic objectives; establishes the ethical and legal base for policy
- **Evaluates** – builds systematic evaluation of early outcomes into the policy process
- **Reviews** – keeps established policy under review to ensure it continues to deal

with the problems it was designed to tackle, taking account of associated effects elsewhere

- **Learns lessons** – learns from experience of what works and what doesn't

Strategic Policy Making Team, The Cabinet Office, UK, 1999.