Chapter 10:

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

GUIDE

CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Front cover photo: Susan Thubi, a Clinical Officer at the Nazareth Holy Family Clinic in Limuru, Kenya, checks the records of a patient who has come to the center for treatment. David Snyder for CRS.

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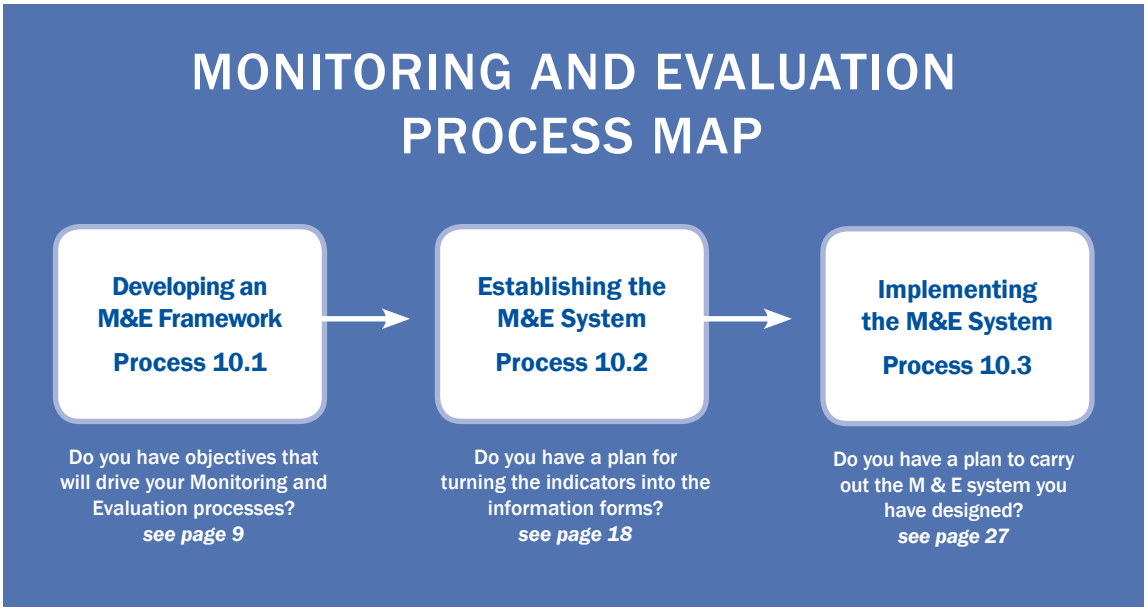
ACRONYMS

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IR	Intermediate Results
LADs	Learning to Action Discussions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SO	Strategic Objective
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal (a form of satellite communication)

CHAPTER 10: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

CARL D. WALSH FOR CRS

Farmers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo village of Ngumba transport heaps of cassava leaves on their bicycles to market.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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The purpose of Chapter 10 is to enable you to understand some of the essential activities in designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Depending on the scale of a project, M&E can be an involved process for which you may need support. This chapter presents a guide to understanding key M&E concepts and activities; the chapter is *not* intended to be a how-to manual.

Good M&E starts during project design. At this stage, you define the project's purpose and develop a strategy to address identified opportunities and challenges. The processes for developing a set of objectives are conducted in a way that supports the design, establishment, and implementation of a high-quality M&E system for the project. Table 10.1 summarizes the steps of project design.

TABLE 10.1 Key Elements of Project Design That Underpin High-Quality Project M & E

KEY PROJECT DESIGN ELEMENTS	DESCRIPTION
Developing a project ideas (or concept) note	A brief, structured description of a set of preliminary ideas and an outline of a proposed project. This is written before you commit to detailed project design and proposal development.
Planning the project design	A calendar detailing all activities in project design, such as stakeholder analysis, assessments, etc. For each activity, assign responsible person and determine budget.
Completing a stakeholder analysis	A process that enables you to identify important stakeholders and to decide how best to involve them at different stages of designing, establishing, and implementing the project M&E system.
Undertaking necessary assessments	Assessments gather information for project design decisions. This will help you to understand a situation in terms of geographic, political, social, economic, and cultural concerns.
Analyzing and setting project objectives	Identification of the range of possible objectives for the project you are designing. Objectives should be analyzed by asking, "Why have you selected these project objectives?"
Reviewing different project strategies	There are likely many possible strategies for accomplishing your objectives. In agriculture, for example, there are many approaches to inproving productivity. It is at this point in the process that you will decide which specific approaches will be used in this particular project.

The project M&E system is founded on the project design work. The remainder of this chapter will guide you through the following three business processes[1] required for high quality M&E:

1. **Developing the M&E framework** during project planning for inclusion in the project proposal submitted to donors. This design work provides a strong foundation for establishing a project M&E system once an award has been made.
2. **Establishing the M&E system** based on commitments made in the proposal regarding objectives and indicators.
3. **Implementing the M&E system** so that project staff can manage the project as well as document and learn from the results.

High-quality projects depend on careful monitoring of activities and outcomes in order to track progress toward a positive impact on the lives of the poor and marginalized. Data collected during project implementation support project managers who make sometimes difficult operational and strategic decisions. Quality M&E is also essential to capture lessons learned in order to manage, apply, and share knowledge within your organization.

1 The processes described in the M&E chapter have drawn heavily from Catholic Relief Services materials. In particular, the following documents have been used: Hagens et al. (2009), Hahn and Sharrock (2010), and Stetson et al. (2004 and 2007).

WHAT FUNCTION DOES M&E SERVE?

Monitoring: High-quality monitoring of information encourages timely decision-making, ensures project accountability, and provides a robust foundation for evaluation and learning. It is through the continuous monitoring of project performance that you have an opportunity to learn about what is working well and what challenges are arising. Job descriptions of staff involved in managing and implementing projects should include assigned M&E responsibilities.

Evaluation: Depending on its specific purpose, a high-quality evaluation provides information that enables you to improve an ongoing project, judge the overall merits of a project, or generate knowledge about what works and what doesn't to influence an organization's strategy and policy.

Most evaluations will consider one or more of the following criteria:[2]

1. *Relevance* – Did the project address the needs of community members?
2. *Efficiency* – Did the project do so in a manner that was as low-cost as possible?
3. *Effectiveness* – Did the project change existing practices in a beneficial manner?
4. *Impact* – What was the effect of those changes?
5. *Sustainability* – Are the changes sustainable?

While monitoring naturally includes elements of evaluation, there are clear differences between the two processes. Table 10.2 outlines those differences.

JOE WEBER/CRS

Members of the St. Patrick's All-Stars marching band in Old Harbour Bay, Jamaica, after Hurricane Dean in September, 2007.

2 For further information on these five evaluation criteria, see OECD/DAC (1991).

TABLE 10.2 Differences Between Monitoring and Evaluation

MONITORING	MID-TERM OR FINAL EVALUATION
Provides information enabling management staff to assess implementation progress and make timely decisions.	Relies on more detailed data (e.g., from surveys or studies) in addition to that collected through the monitoring system to understand the project in greater depth.
Is concerned with verifying that project activities are being undertaken, services are being delivered, and the project is leading to the desired behavior changes described in the project proposal.	Assesses higher level outcomes and impact and may verify some of the findings from the monitoring. Evaluations should explore both anticipated and unanticipated results.
Is an internal project activity.	Can be externally led (particularly end-of-project evaluations), though they should involve the active participation of project staff.
Is an essential part of good day-to-day management practice.	Is an essential activity in a longer-term dynamic learning process.
Is an essential part of day-to-day management and must be integrated within the project management structure.	Is important for making decisions on overall project direction.
Takes place during the implementation phase.	Occurs at pre-determined points during implementation. Other smaller evaluations may be undertaken to meet specific information needs throughout the process.
Generally focuses on the question “Are we doing things right?”	Generally focuses on the question “Are we doing the right thing?”

M&E is a support activity intended to enhance the work of those involved in project management and implementation. M&E must never become so burdensome that it slows down implementation. If this is the case, revisit the M&E system set up during detailed implementation planning, and always ask if too much information is being collected or if enough time, staff, and financial resources have been allocated to collect the important data.

SUMMARY OF THIS GUIDE

Business Process 10.1 explains in three steps how to develop the Results Framework, Logical Planning Framework, and an M&E narrative.This section assumes that the initial project design work has already been completed. The steps outlined in Business Process 10.1 will enable you to establish a comprehensive M&E system.

Step 10.1.1 breaks down the development of an M&E system into easily understood parts for development of an M&E Operating Manual. Step 10.1.2 describes a process to ensure the active participation of community members in designing an M&E system and Step 10.1.3 outlines a process to make the system operational, including the field-testing of the system. Maintaining a transparent and participatory process helps to make certain that each staff member has a clear understanding of the project and his or her role in the project's monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities.

Business Process 10.2 describes the business process to establish an M&E system once an award has been made. It builds on Step 10.1 and ensures that a project's objectives and their indicators are linked to a coherent system to collect, analyze, and report on data.

Business Process 10.3 discusses import steps in the implementation of an M&E system. Step 10.3.1 shows how to manage quantitative and qualitative data. Step 10.3.2 provides advice on planning, managing, and communicating evaluations that offer significant learning opportunities for project staff. Finally, Step 10.3.3 emphasizes that, because of the time and money involved, M&E should be driven by a consideration of how the collected information will be used.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE M&E FUNCTION

As agents of development you stand in service to the poor and marginalized. Your responsibility is to engage and empower communities in programs that improve and enrich their lives. You are entrusted with significant resources to support humanitarian and development efforts for which you are held accountable. Undertaking good quality M&E will promote better learning and strengthen accountability to stakeholders.

Undertaking good quality M&E will promote better learning and strengthen accountability to stakeholders.

M&E is guided by the following key principles:[3]

1. *Systematic Inquiry* – Staff conduct site-based inquiries that gather both quantitative and qualitative data in a systematic and high-quality manner.
2. *Honesty/Integrity* – Staff display honesty and integrity in their own behavior and contribute to the honesty and integrity of the entire M&E business process.
3. *Respect for People* – Staff respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other M&E stakeholders.
4. *Responsibilities to Stakeholders* – Staff members articulate and take into account the diversity of different stakeholders' interests and values that are relevant to project M&E activities.

Some important ethical dimensions of M&E activity are discussed briefly in Hagens (2008).

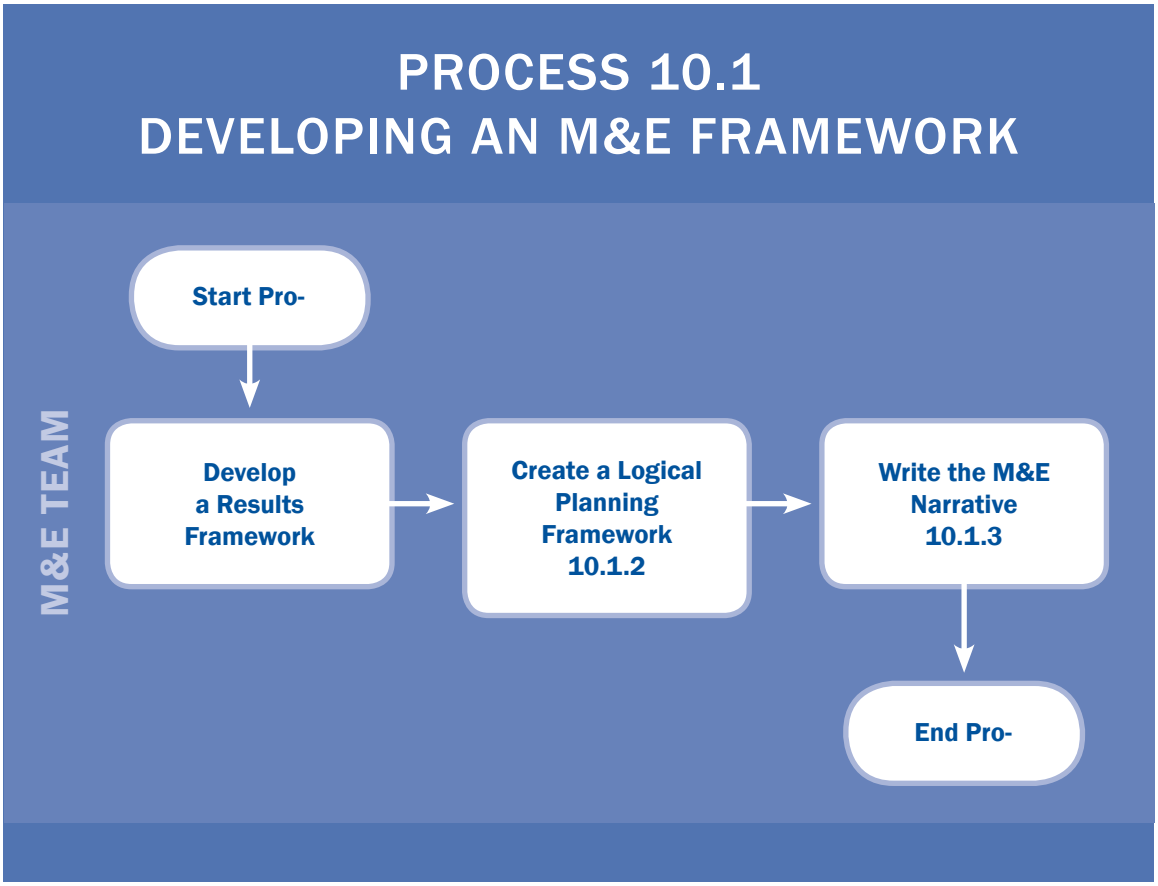
3 Adapted from American Evaluation Association (2004).

M&E BUSINESS PROCESS 10.1 - DEVELOPING AN M&E FRAMEWORK

PROCESS DESCRIPTION

You have learned that the project's M&E system is built on the work undertaken during project design. It is now time to develop the M&E framework. A key feature of this work is the identification of a set of objectives, structured in a manner that provides a firm foundation for the design, establishment, and operation of the M&E system. A number of M&E tools can be used to develop the M&E framework; this section describes two of the most well known M&E planning tools and provides guidance on how to develop a narrative describing the M&E system for inclusion in the project proposal.

PROCESS FLOW



STEP 10.1.1 – DEVELOP A RESULTS FRAMEWORK

STEP NAME	DEVELOP A RESULTS FRAMEWORK
Step Number	10.1.1
Inputs	Completion of the project design elements *Appendix A: Example Results Framework* *Appendix B: Master Translator*
Outputs	Results framework
Roles	Project design team – configuration of technical and management staff and other stakeholders who can contribute to the design of the project and may be involved in project implementation. An M&E specialist can facilitate this step.
Integration Points	N/A
Summary	A results framework provides a graphical representation of your project. It summarizes the key elements of your project by linking different levels of objectives showing a cause and effect relationship.

A results framework (see *Appendix A: Example Results Framework*) is an excellent planning tool because it encourages clear, strategic thinking in the project design phase. It provides you with a one-page overview of the heart of the project. It is often used by those not directly involved in a project to get an accurate overview of the project's primary purpose and key interventions.

A results framework provides a snapshot of the different levels of the project objectives. It shows a vertical arrangement of levels of objective statements—known as an "objectives hierarchy"—and allows the reader to see how success at one level can lead toward success at the next. The results framework reflects the project's strategy, also known as "theory of change," which describes show the project design team thinks the project is going to work.

The hierarchy reflects the following levels of objectives:

- *Goal* – This is the long-term development objective to which this project contributes.
- *Strategic Objective(s)* – This is arguably the most important level of objective because it states the purpose of the project. The strategic objectives outline the benefits to be enjoyed by the target group(s) upon successful implementation of the project.

- *Intermediate Results* – These reflect the uptake/use of project outputs by participants, usually reflecting a behavior change.
- *Outputs* – These are the project's deliverables such as increased knowledge and skills of farmers, changed attitudes, or delivery of other benefits. Include outputs in the results framework because they represent specific interventions of the project and clarify the proposed strategy.
- *Activities* – Although not present in the results framework, these are shown in the logical planning framework (see step 10.1.2.) These are the tasks undertaken, reflected in the project's annual action plan. Activities are never presented in a results framework but are included in the logical planning framework, which is presented in the next step.

*Appendix A: Example Results Framework*is a modified results framework from a Catholic Relief Services (CRS) project. In this example, we see that the Strategic Objective (SO) states the primary purpose of the project, i.e. that farm families will be enjoying increased agricultural productivity and incomes by the end of the project. Achieving the SO is a feasible ambition given the resources available and the duration of the project. The Intermediate Results (IRs) reflect the changes necessary to current practices if the SO is to be achieved. In the example the IRs indicates an expectation that no-till agriculture practices will be used, that farmers will adopt improved approaches to natural resource management, and that they will organize themselves to market their produce. The project's theory of change is that if these three IRs are achieved, then agricultural productivity and incomes will increase.

As you start to develop your understandings of results frameworks, consider the following:

- *Start early* – Draft a results framework early in the project design stage, soon after your assessment and problem analysis. This will allow you to clearly lay out your thinking regarding your theory of change. Include the results framework in your project ideas note.
- *Allow time* – The results framework appears simple but takes time. Your initial version will likely be revised during the design process. Such revisions reflect the discussions and debates that will occur as the objectives of the project become more focused.
- *Use it as a snapshot* – Use the results framework to bring clarity to your thinking. Do not over-complicate it – the results framework should be kept as simple as possible. Do not have more than three strategic objectives.
- *Do not be intimidated* – The more you use results frameworks the more comfortable you will be with them.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYLYNN HEWITT

Vulnerable groups suffer disproportionately from upheaval in the Middle East.

- *Be mindful of the terminology* – It is important to note that every donor has its own terminology for describing the different levels in an objectives hierarchy (see *Appendix B: Master Translator*.) Always check for the latest information in this regard.

Use the Example Results Framework and the outputs from the project design effort to develop a results framework that reflects your proposed project design and strategy.

STEP 10.1.2 – CREATE A LOGICAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

STEP NAME	CREATE A LOGICAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK
Step Number	10.1.2
Inputs	Results framework *Appendix C: Cheat Sheet for Working with Logical Planning Frameworks* *Appendix D: Example Logical Planning Framework*
Outputs	Logical planning framework
Roles	Project design team – configuration of technical and management staff and other stakeholders who can contribute to the design of the project and may be involved in project implementation. An M&E specialist can facilitate this step.
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	There are many variations of the logical planning matrix but they usually include the objectives hierarchy described in Step 10.1.1, related performance indicators and associated measurement methods, and critical assumptions that underpin the logical upwards progression of the framework.

A logical planning framework is a matrix that allows you to further develop the work you did in Step 10.1.1. While the results framework is a snapshot of a project's higher-level objectives, the logical planning framework provides information about its activities, the performance indicator(s) for each objective, a brief description of how data will be measured or collected, and any critical assumptions that underpin the project's theory of change. The matrix used in the logical planning framework is shown in Table 10.3.

TABLE 10.3 Logical Planning Framework Matrix

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicators	Measurement Methods/Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
Goal			
Strategic Objectives			
Intermediate Results			
Outputs			
Activities			

Source: Stetson *et al*. 2004: 99.

Constructing a logical planning framework follows a general pattern, but it is also an interactive and dynamic process in which you will develop many drafts before finalizing one. The essential tasks for completing a logical planning framework are as follows (see also *Appendix C: Cheat Sheet for Working with Logical Planning Frameworks*):

1. **Fill in column one**. Use your results framework developed in Step 10.1.1 to fill in the first column with the goal statement, strategic objectives, intermediate results, and outputs. In *Appendix D: Example Logical Planning Framework* you see that the objectives in the results framework have been copied into column one of the logical planning framework. Add the activities for each of the outputs; do not list detailed activities but major categories such as "train women farmers on improved seeds" and "develop manual on promoting girls' education."
2. **Fill in column four**. Work upwards to complete column four. Critical assumptions represent those factors that lie outside the control of the project yet underpin its ultimate success. For example, the success of a project may be built on the critical assumption that a stakeholder will fulfill its commitments; failure to do so would jeopardize that success. See the *Example Logical Planning Framework*. **If** farmers form associations and are sensitized to

the advantages of no-till agriculture (Activities) **and** the village chiefs approve access to land for demonstration plots (the critical assumption linking Activities to IR), **then** the famers will see how no-till agriculture improves productivity compared with traditional methods. Critical assumptions are most important at the lower level of objectives because this is where assumptions about uncontrollable events have the most influence. Based on your discussions about critical assumptions, you may need to revisit column one to add other activities to lessen the risk to the project.

3. **Fill in columns two and three**. Start from the top and work down because, in the process of selecting performance indicators and measurement methods, you may find objectives that cannot be measured as stated and therefore need revision. This, in turn, may require revision of others farther down the matrix. Include a balance of both quantitative and qualitative data. It can take time to decide on all of the indicators and measurement methods and then ensure they match the objective statement. Take sufficient time to complete these columns, because they are the driving force for your project's M&E system. Note that the heading for Column 3 in the *Example Logical Planning Framework* indicates that all the indicator data will be described in the M&E Operating Manual (see Step 10.2.1.) Note too that there can be more than one indicator for a single objective.
4. **Finalize the logical planning framework.** Once you have finished the framework, reconcile any change in objective statements with those in the draft of the results framework.

HOLLY INURETTA/CRS

Volunteers of Caritas Concepción pack clothing kits that have been prepared to assist people displaced in the aftermath of the earthquake and ensuing tsunami that hit Chile in 2010.

STEP 10.1.3 – WRITE THE M&E NARRATIVE

STEP NAME	WRITE THE M&E NARRATIVE
Step Number	10.1.3
Inputs	Results framework Logical planning framework
Outputs	M&E narrative
Roles	Project design team – configuration of technical and management staff and other stakeholders who can contribute to the design of the project and may be involved in project implementation. An M&E specialist can facilitate this step.
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	Use the outputs of Step 10.1.1 and Step 10.1.2 to develop an M&E narrative. The narrative will add detail to the monitoring and evaluation outlined in these previous steps. Topics are proposed for the M&E narrative but donor guidance should be used if provided.

In the narrative, you will describe the project monitoring system and planned evaluations. Readers of the M&E narrative should be able to judge the appropriateness of your plans, and to have confidence in your ability to undertake the proposed M&E activities. It is likely that donors will have their own specific requirements for the content of the M&E narrative, so donor guidance should be followed where applicable.

Broadly speaking, the M&E narrative should describe your plans for the following:

- Project monitoring
- Baseline, mid-term and final evaluations

Project Monitoring

The narrative will be based on the completed results framework and logical planning framework. It describes the proposed system that will ensure performance indicator data are collected, analyzed, and reported. The M&E narrative is an opportunity to describe in more detail the methods that you are intending to use to collect and analyze data, and report ongoing project progress and achievement of the strategic objectives. The narrative should describe the participation of beneficiaries in the M&E system so that their contributions can inform internal decision-making and project reporting.

The narrative will include a description of how the data generated will be used by project staff to assess the need for modifications to planned project operations. It is important to briefly describe your plans for internal project meetings and other reflective events that will utilize information generated by the project monitoring system.

Depending on the scale and complexity of the project, it may be useful to include other M&E tools that further define the M&E system, including the two listed below:[4]

- *Indicator Performance Tracking Table* – to provide details of the baseline values (where available) and performance targets that have been set for each year of the project for large-scale projects. For smaller projects, it may be simpler to integrate the target information with the performance indicator statement in the second column of the logical planning framework.
- *M&E Calendar* – to provide a detailed schedule for the M&E activities and events you are planning, including the establishment of the M&E system itself (see Step 10.2.1).

Baseline, Mid-term and Final Evaluations

The project's size and complexity will to a large extent determine how the baseline and final evaluations are best conducted. Usually, external M&E service providers conduct the final evaluation. The narrative will indicate when you expect to undertake both the baseline and final evaluations and an outline of the evaluation method you will use.

You may decide that the project duration merits a mid-term review. Use the narrative to describe its purpose, the kind of information that you would expect it to generate, and how that information will be used to guide subsequent project operations.

You have now completed the process for developing the framework for your M&E system. In the next section, you will learn how to establish the M&E system once the award has been made.

4 Both tools are described in Chapter IV of Stetson et al. (2004.)

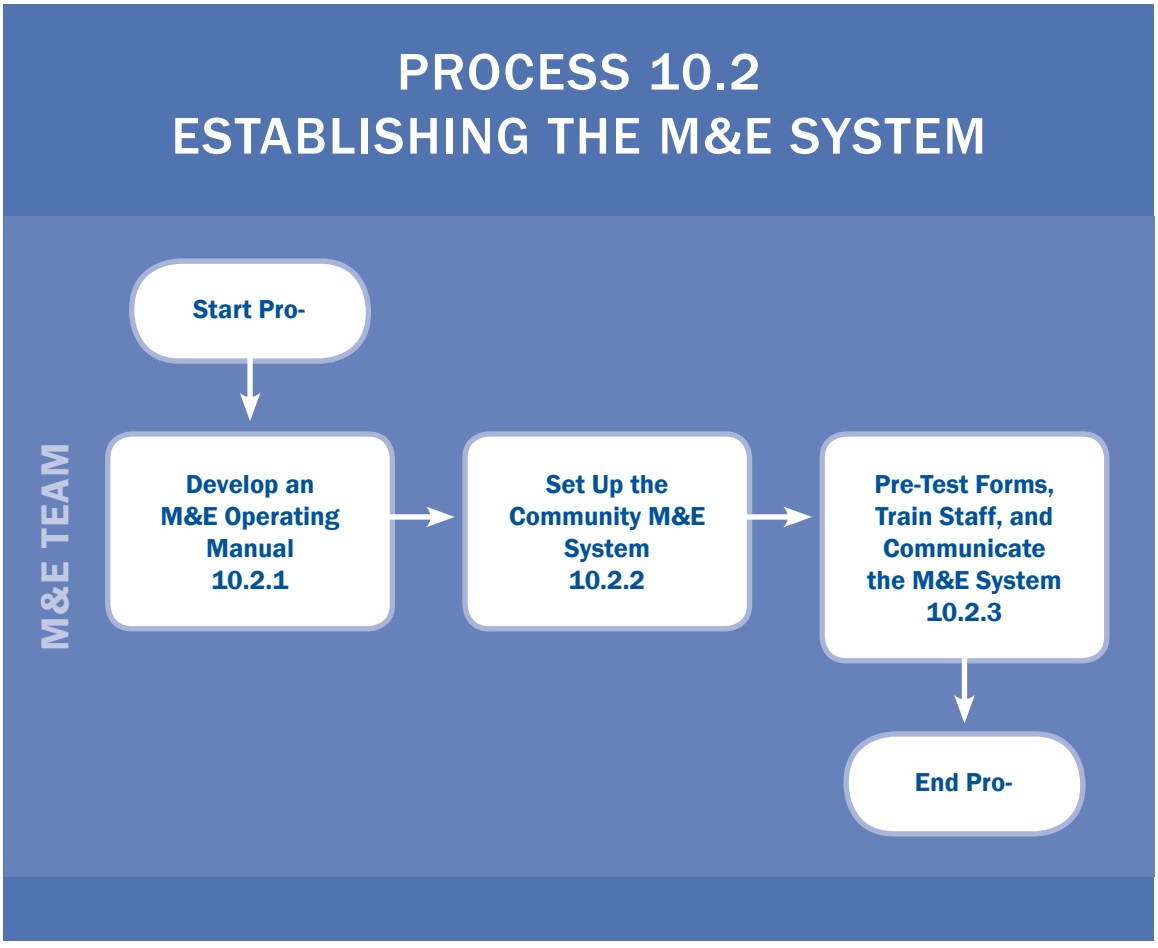
M&E BUSINESS PROCESS 10.2 - ESTABLISHING THE M&E SYSTEM

PROCESS DESCRIPTION

In Business Process 10.1, you laid the foundation for the establishment of the M&E system. You defined project objectives, their indicators, and how those indicators would be measured. In Process 10.2, you will learn about the essential steps to establish an M&E system that connects the defined indicators with the forms required to collect and report on data. This M&E system incorporates features for learning and decision-making based on robust and reliable evidence.

Project M&E systems are best when they balance the needs of project staff and donors in generating timely field-level information on progress and success with those of community members to influence project learning, direction, and ultimately learning. These are critical elements of a high performing, dynamic learning organization.

PROCESS FLOW



STEP 10.2.1 – DEVELOP AN M&E OPERATING MANUAL

STEP NAME	DEVELOP AN M&E OPERATING MANUAL[5]
Step Number	10.2.1
Inputs	All the relevant documents that were developed for the project proposal *Appendix E: Example Data Flow Map* *Appendix F: Example Instruction Sheet* *Appendix G: Example Communication and Reporting Map* *Appendix H: Sample Prompt Questions for Learning to Action Discussions*
Outputs	Hard and soft copy of all documents in the M&E operating manual including data-gathering forms and report formats. See Table 10.4 below for a full list of documents in the manual.
Roles	Staff assigned with M&E responsibilities Program and technical specialists Senior staff member or external advisor appointed to facilitate the process
Integration Points	Finance Human Resources Procurement (for in-kind projects)
Step Summary	The M&E Operating Manual contains all of the documents needed to implement the M&E system. While this work takes time, it will ensure that your data are collected and analyzed in a comprehensive and rigorous way. The manual includes steps to ensure the data are turned into useful information that is used in making decisions about project direction and in reporting on project results and impact.

The M&E system is the backbone of the project because the objectives and their indicators are linked to a transparent system to collect, analyze, and report on data. By carefully designing and developing the data-gathering tools for M&E you ensure that all required data are collected and extraneous data are not. The system will include mechanisms to turn data into useful evidence that supports sound project decision-making and ensure that all staff members have a clear understanding of the project and their role in M&E.

All of the documents developed for the M&E system will be organized into an M&E operating manual. This manual becomes the central source of information about your M&E system. The manual should be made available in a ring binder

5 See Hahn and Sharrock (2010) for a more detailed description about the content and process of an M&E Operating Manual.

as well as electronically. Both hard and soft copies should be shared with others when step 10.2.1 is finished. Assign a staff member the responsibility for keeping the hard and soft copies of the manual updated.

Experience has shown that it is best to meet with a small group of project staff including M&E, management, and technical to draft the first version of the M&E operating manual. Request a facilitator who can help manage the process and oversee the development of the manual.

Table 10.4 lists the documents that represent the key elements of your M&E system. Include the appropriate documentation for each element in your M&E operating manual, organized under three headings as seen in the table.

TABLE 10.4 Key Elements of the Project M&E System

M&E SYSTEM ELEMENT	M&E OPERATING MANUAL DOCUMENTATION
Component 1: Getting Organized	
Table of Contents	List all of the documents in your project M&E operating manual in a Table of Contents with the correct title and date of the most recent version.
M&E Purpose Statement	In writing this brief statement, answer the broad question of why you are setting up an M&E system for this particular project. There will be more obvious reasons (e.g., to monitor and report progress), but also less obvious ones, such as your desire to experiment with new community-based approaches.
Stakeholder Analysis	This builds on the stakeholder analysis conducted during project design. Revisit the list and identify the information stakeholders need. Check the indicators to ensure that you are collecting this information. The list will also be used in your communication and reporting plan.
M&E Working Group	List those people who agree to help oversee the operation of the M&E system, along with a list of tasks they plan to address.
Component 2: Setting Up	
Results Framework	Review output from step 10.1.1
Logical Planning Framework	Review output from step 10.1.2
Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)	The IPTT may have been developed earlier for inclusion in the project proposal. It shows indicator targets and accomplishments for each year of the project. If available, the earlier draft will be reviewed; if not, the IPTT may have to be developed as part of step 10.2.1[6].

6 For further information on IPTTs, see Stetson et al. (2004, pp. 140–143) and Willard (2008a).

Detailed Implementation Plan, Including M&E	An M&E calendar/schedule may have been prepared earlier for reference in the M&E narrative of the proposal. The annual detailed implementation plan builds on this by listing activities and the people responsible for them for each project output. It also contains detailed activities for setting up and operating the M&E system.
Component 3: Designing Forms and Reports	
Data Flow Maps	Data maps show the flow of indicators through the data-gathering forms and report formats and how they are connected. The maps ensure a process for collecting data for the indicators listed in the project proposal. Depending on the scale and complexity of the project, there may be several data flow maps. See *Appendix E: Example Data Flow Map*.
Data-Gathering Forms	These forms are created to collect data based on the data flow maps. These may include monitoring forms, medical records, or survey questionnaires. There may be existing forms that you can already use.
Report Formats	These are created to be filled out by project staff or project participants to transmit data and information to the next reporting level, including the management team and the donor.
Instructions Sheets	These provide clear instructions on how to fill out each item in the data-gathering forms and report formats. See *Appendix F: Example Instruction Sheet*.
Communication and Reporting Maps	These diagrams show the flow of reports and other communications to all relevant stakeholders, including responsible persons and dates. See *Appendix G: Example Communication and Reporting Map*.
Learning to Action Discussions	This is a list of questions that might be posed to prompt productive discussion and analysis of the data and action required. *Appendix H: Sample Prompt Questions for Learning to Action Discussions* lists prompt questions that provide a structure for analyzing data and discussing their implications for responsive project management with all levels of stakeholders. For more discussion on Learning to Action Discussions see Step 10.3.3.
Capacities and Resources	All too often M&E is under-resourced. An effective M&E system requires human resources, staff training, funding, and material resources. Staff with M&E responsibilities must have the knowledge, skills, tools, and support to undertake their respective tasks. This should be discussed with your colleagues who have been assigned HR and Finance responsibilities.
Reports and Evaluations	Progress reports are an important vehicle for analyzing, summarizing, and communicating monitoring data to different stakeholders. You will already have discussed reports and evaluations as you worked on the data flow maps, data-gathering forms, and report formats. These reports and evaluations ultimately represent key outputs from your M&E system once it is up and running.

DAVID SNYDER FOR CRS

A boat navigates a river near a CRS-supported rehabilitation project in southern Bangladesh.

With guidance from the M&E Working Group, periodically review the M&E system to confirm that it is providing useful and timely information. If the M&E system is not effectively providing a service that meets the needs of staff and other stakeholders, take the opportunity to assess why this might be the case and seek possible solutions.

STEP 10.2.2 – SET UP THE COMMUNITY M&E SYSTEM

STEP NAME	SET UP THE COMMUNITY M&E SYSTEM
Step Number	10.2.2
Inputs	M&E operating manual
Outputs	Community members engaged with the collection and analysis of data for a project that impacts their lives.
Roles	Project M&E Technical staff
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	Implement a system for listening to and learning from community members and for responding to their concerns in a transparent manner. The community M&E system is part of the data flow map. Staff will need training in supporting communities to manage their M&E systems.

Individuals and communities are the primary stakeholders of the project, but accountability to them is often overlooked. Community engagement allows communities to play a more active role in project management, reflect upon progress, and assess changes in their situation. Community involvement in monitoring also builds the community's capacity to direct their own development, increases the community's sense of ownership of the project, and builds accountability and transparency.

Engage communities in indicator definition, data collection, and analysis

Many of the project's performance indicators are collected at the community level. What role does the community have in collecting and analyzing this information? Use those indicators as the starting point for the community M&E system, but plan to spend time meeting with community members to make sure that their information needs are being addressed.

Include communities in the interpretation of monitoring results. Hold regular meetings with community members to discuss and interpret these results against the project's monitoring questions and information needs.

Train staff to work with communities

Ensure that staff can train and support communities in their roles and responsibilities. Supervisors and managers can support these efforts during site visits and community meetings.

STEP 10.2.3 – PRE-TEST FORMS, TRAIN STAFF, AND COMMUNICATE THE M&E SYSTEM

STEP NAME	PRE-TEST FORMS, TRAIN STAFF, AND COMMUNICATE THE M&E SYSTEM
Step Number	10.2.3
Inputs	M&E operating manual, including data-gathering forms, instruction sheets, report formats, and a communication and reporting map
Outputs	Project staff members who are well informed about the M&E system and competent to carry out their responsibilities.
Roles	Staff with assigned project M&E responsibilities Project staff who will be responsible for collecting monitoring data Project managers
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	The data gathering forms and report formats are pre-tested using the draft instruction sheets to ensure that consistent data are collected across the project. All data-gathering staff members need to be trained on the system and feel competent to carry out their responsibilities. All project staff members, particularly supervisors and managers, should understand the M&E system and understand their roles in the system.

The M&E operating manual (Step 10.2.1) is complete, but forms and processes may change as the M&E system is implemented. Changes may also occur as you train staff on the use of the system and as you inform all staff about the system and how it will work. Each time a change is made, the relevant tools need to be tested and adjusted if necessary. The M&E operating manual is also updated with the new or revised tools.

Pre-test data-gathering forms

Data-gathering forms need to be tested in the field to ensure that they are capturing the right information and that those people collecting the data understand the forms. Project staff members who use the forms should be part of the testing team. Through field testing, you identify questions that are unclear, ambiguous, or otherwise not likely to yield desired information.

Work with these same staff members to test the reporting formats. Field staff and volunteers are often responsible for collecting and reporting on the source data for much of the project's monitoring system. Work through the report

formats with them so they clearly understand the formats and how to use them.

Field test each tool in a nearby community to avoid extended travel time. Following the field test, hold a team discussion to solicit feedback on how the tools worked overall and any suggestions for revising or altering specific instruction sheets. Make final revisions to the instruction sheets based on this discussion.

The forms may have to be translated into one or more local languages. Spend sufficient time on this step to ensure that all data gatherers are interpreting the questions in the same fashion so data collection is consistent and reliable.

Train staff in collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data

Staff capacity to implement the project M&E system often requires significant strengthening. Even staff with extensive experience in M&E should be trained on the specific objectives, tools, and protocols for each M&E activity to ensure that there is consistency and quality.

There are three key tasks involved in planning and delivering quality staff training. You must assess and identify training needs and resources; deliver high-quality training; and follow-up, monitor and evaluate. In an initial training session, you may want to cover the following topics:

1. Objectives and overview of the project M&E system
2. Principles of data collection, including key ethical considerations[7]
3. Detailed focus on specific M&E system topics such as data-gathering forms, instruction sheets, and report formats

All staff members who collect and analyze data require training.

All staff members who collect and analyze data require training. Also include data entry staff in the training because they need to understand the structure and operation of the system as well as the data-gathering forms and instruction sheets. This will help to reduce errors and increase time efficiency during the data entry process. Hold additional training for supervisors to discuss their roles and responsibilities. Supervisors provide follow-up support to ensure the quality of the data gathered through the project monitoring system.

Communicate the M&E system to all project staff

Develop a plan to ensure that all staff members involved in implementing the project understand the M&E system and their responsibilities within it. Roles include data gathering, data entry, data analysis, report writing, and using data to manage the project. Each person needs to have a good overview of the M&E system, how it operates, and his or her specific responsibilities.This will ensure that accurate data, collected in a timely manner, are used to keep the project on track to achieve its stated objectives.

The observations and decisions of the M&E working group should also be communicated on a regular basis. Use project meetings and agency meetings to keep technical and management staff up to date on the M&E system, findings, and use of the information.

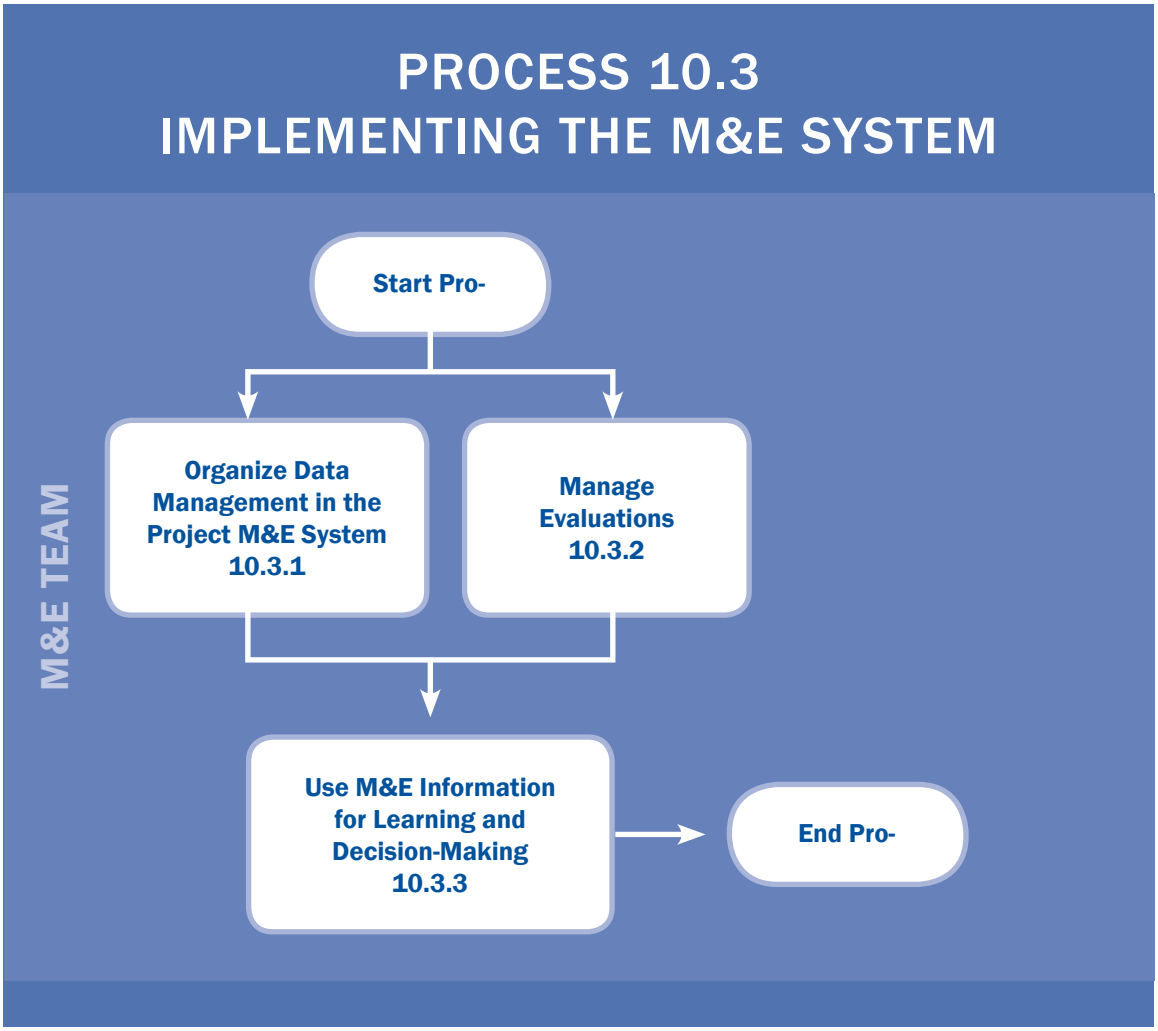
7 See Hagens (2008)

M&E BUSINESS PROCESS 10.3 - IMPLEMENTING THE M&E SYSTEM

PROCESS DESCRIPTION

In Business Process 10.1, you developed a framework for project M&E. In Business Process 10.2, you established the M&E system to ensure a transparent and carefully designed system, involving community participation, for collecting and reporting high-quality M&E data. Business Process 10.3 guides you through the key steps to implementing the system so that M&E data are organized, managed, and used to provide useful and timely information to all relevant project stakeholders.

PROCESS FLOW



STEP 10.3.1 – ORGANIZE DATA MANAGEMENT IN THE PROJECT M&E SYSTEM

STEP NAME	ORGANIZE DATA MANAGEMENT IN THE PROJECT M&E SYSTEM
Step Number	10.3.1
Inputs	M&E operating manual, including the project data-gathering forms, report formats, beneficiary records, questionnaires, etc. *Appendix I: Data Management*
Outputs	Functioning data management system
Roles	Staff with assigned project M&E responsibilities Program staff Staff with information and communication technology (ICT) responsibilities External consultants
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	As project implementation starts, turn your attention to managing the M&E data that the system will be generating. A database systematically transforms data into information that enables you to make decisions, review trends, and meet the information needs of your stakeholders. Develop separate databases for data from monitoring and those collected in the baseline or other evaluations. Make certain that data are entered in a way that minimizes error and ensures information is available for analysis and interpretation in a timely manner.

Set up databases to manage the flow of data and ensure that the system produces good quality and timely information. The database houses data that are checked, validated, and securely stored. Good data management enables project staff to run simple calculations to produce summaries for the purposes of analysis and interpretation (see Step 10.3.3). Step 10.3.1 is concerned with the three following main tasks:

1. Developing project M&E databases
2. Data entry and cleaning
3. Data storage

Developing a Database

1. **Determine the purpose of the database.** Do not merge monitoring and evaluation data in one database. Instead create separate monitoring and evaluation databases for the same project. See *Appendix I: Data Management* for a comparison of monitoring and evaluation databases.

2. **Check with other staff in your organization to see if there are well-functioning and efficient monitoring databases already in use**. If the structure of an existing database is appropriate for your program, use its format as a starting point.
3. **Decide on your choice of software.** The software used should be appropriate to the project's needs and resources. The common types of quantitative database software used are Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Your choice may be determined to a large extent by what you are already using. Nonetheless, given that new products are constantly being developed, it is advisable to consult with colleagues before coming to a decision. See also *Appendix I: Data Management* for a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of different software programs.
4. **Consider the possibility of using information and communication technology (ICT) solutions (e.g., cell phone applications) as a means to collect, analyze, and report on project data.** If you do not have experience in this area, seek advice.
5. **Design the project database to make data accessible for timely and efficient decision-making.** The database should be user-friendly for both those entering the data and those analyzing it by ensuring that the data entry and analysis processes are as simple and straightforward as possible.
6. **Include instructions concerning the database in your M&E operations manual**. This should include explanations of all variables, functions, and calculations so that new staff can easily understand and utilize the database. Also document the data entry and cleaning process so that they may be externally validated.

Data Entry and Cleaning

1. **Organize data entry efficiently so that analysis and results can quickly feed into project management and decision-making**. Create a coherent filing system to manage your data-gathering forms and consider how best to organize the data entry process so that it runs smoothly.
2. **Seek to minimize data entry error**. Minimize any differences between the data recorded in data-gathering forms and data entered in the database by training the data entry team, supervising the data entry process, and conducting regular checks. Clean the data once entered by running preliminary analyses and crosschecking any unexpected results against the data in the questionnaires.

Data Storage and Security

1. **Organize record keeping from the start.** Set up filing and record keeping systems for both paper-based forms and digitized information. Just as you have a well organized M&E operating manual, it is equally important that you develop a data-storage system that facilitates secure access.
2. **Backup your electronic data on a regular basis**. Electronic data can all too easily be lost through a computer "crashing," or through corruption that renders the data unusable. Establish a policy and system that ensures your M&E data are regularly backed up.
3. **Consider identity protection issues for target populations.** This is in accordance with the principles of honesty, integrity, and respect for people noted on page 8.

STEP 10.3.2 – MANAGE EVALUATIONS

STEP NAME	MANAGE EVALUATIONS
Step Number	10.3.2
Inputs	M&E operating manual
Outputs	Evaluation report and other communication products
Roles	Staff with assigned project M&E responsibilities Program staff Staff with ICT responsibilities External consultants
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	The levels of effort for baseline, midterm, and final evaluations depend on the scale and significance of the project. Your goal is to increase the quality of your organization's M&E activities through well-managed evaluations. A checklist summarizes the tasks involved in managing evaluations.

In the project proposal, plans may have been outlined for baseline, midterm, and final evaluations. These are costly and time consuming, so careful thought and planning are needed for a worthwhile evaluation.

Why evaluate? Evaluations provide detailed information of a project's progress (midterm) and achievements (baseline to final). When expectations and requirements are poorly defined or misunderstood, however, evaluations can be very stressful for staff and community members.

Table 10.5 provides a sample checklist of tasks to consider in managing evaluations.[8]

8 Readers are recommended to refer to Willard (2008b and 2008c) and Stetson (2008) for information on preparing for and managing, and reporting and communicating on an evaluation, respectively.

TABLE 10.5 Sample Checklist of Evaluation Tasks

MAJOR TASK	TASKS
Scope of Work	Scope of work drafted, reviewed by staff and management, and finalized
	Consultants identified
Personnel	Consultant references checked
	Project staff deployed (assigned & existing workload reallocated during evaluation)
	Team assembled
	Teambuilding meeting conducted
Financial	Evaluation budget developed
	Consultant fees negotiated
	Per diem and travel advances arranged for all staff
	Evaluation budget revised
	Expense report, forms, and instructions sent to consultant
Logistical	Vehicles and drivers arranged
	Translators arranged
	Lodging arranged near main office and up-country
	Airline tickets arranged
	Visa, work permits, and security clearances arranged
	Support staff and office space arranged
Relations	Stakeholders (donor, ministries) notified
	Scope of work circulated with team leader résumé
	Communities engaged in/aware of evaluation timing and purpose
	Communication schedule worked out between evaluation manager and project manager

Psychological Elements	Evaluation manager mentor chosen
	Safety valve for evaluation team developed (weekend options, half day excursions, etc.)
	Staff engaged in/aware of evaluation timing and purpose as well as implications of shifting workloads
Contractual	Contracts for consultants finalized
	Logistical arrangements finalized
	Signed copies of contracts received
Deliverables	Deliverables negotiated with consultants
	Organizational deliverables assigned with timeframes
	Review period (consolidating comments)
	Revision and approval of contract
Communication	Schedule worked out between evaluation manager and evaluation team leader (type of communication, day of the week, time, etc.)
	Schedule worked out between evaluation manager and project manager (type of communication, day of the week, time, etc.)
	Protocol for contacting local authorities developed, mechanism ready for when communities are chosen for field visits
	Communication options (local cell phones, VSAT [satellite], shortwave radio, etc.) arranged
Work plan and Timeline	Evaluation process milestones developed with consultants
	Evaluation process defined and tasks allocated among evaluation team
	Milestones mapped on calendar
	Written work plan/timeline, with tasks highlighted, distributed
Contingency Plans	Medevac insurance purchased for consultants
	Emergency contact numbers organized
	Security briefing given to consultants
	Contingency plan packet distributed (weather, political unrest, etc.)

Source: Willard (2008b)

STEP 10.3.3 – USE M&E INFORMATION FOR LEARNING AND DECISION MAKING

STEP NAME	USE M&E INFORMATION FOR LEARNING AND DECISION MAKING
Step Number	10.3.3
Inputs	Monitoring data and reports Evaluation data and reports *Appendix H: Sample Prompt Questions for Learning to Action Discussions* *Appendix J: Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation*
Outputs	Plan to synthesize and interpret key M&E routine data
Roles	Senior Managers All project staff involved in project implementation
Integration Points	N/A
Step Summary	An M&E system stands or falls by its usefulness to the end users of the information. In this step, the focus is on identifying ways that your organization can encourage a more proactive use of monitoring and evaluation data.

An M&E system stands or falls by its usefulness to the end users of the information.

Project staff members are more likely to use M&E data if they feel confident about its quality and if the information is available in a timely fashion (see Step 10.3.1.) Their willingness to engage with the information is improved if they feel involved in the M&E process. This ensures that they better understand the data. These points increase the likelihood that staff will use M&E information for learning and decision-making.

The M&E system will produce different types of data at different points during the life of the project, as follows:

- Ongoing Project Monitoring
- Baseline, Mid-Term and Final Evaluation

Ongoing Project Monitoring Data

Use of monitoring data to assess progress regularly and make agreed-upon changes is important to the success of the project. Despite its importance, it is precisely this use of data that can often slip by project staff at all levels of the organization.

In Step 10.2.1, you developed a list of questions to prompt good discussion and analysis of the monitoring data being collected. *Appendix H: Sample*

Prompt Questions for Learning to Action Discussions should be tailored for local use. Field staff will discuss the data they have collected with their supervisors; in turn, supervisors will consolidate the data from all their field staff and discuss the aggregated data report with the person to whom they report; and so on. These are known as *Learning to Action Discussions* (LADs). Engaging with the data in this way is enriching and will inform decisions about follow-up action.

These LADs are a time set aside to understand and analyze the data and to discuss implications for the management of the project. While LADs can take place at any time in the project, it is a good practice to link the LADs to the communication and reporting map (see Step 10.2.1.) With this map, you see excellent opportunities for discussing data, findings, and their implication for next steps in the project. The LADs are particularly valuable to staff on site visits for involving community members in discussions about project progress.

With LADs, staff members are encouraged to use the data they have been collecting to reflect on their own work. Junior staff members observe that supervisors and managers use the data to make project decisions. This active use of the data serves to reinforce the collection of data and appreciation of its use in meaningful project management.

KHALIL ANSARA/CRS

In Egypt, where refugees often experience prejudice and a lack of opportunity, a "Peace Camp" brings Iraqi, Sudanese, Egyptian and other children together for summer fun.

Baseline, Mid-Term and Final Evaluation data

Data generated in evaluation surveys will provide a rich source of information for project staff. Consider the following three points:

1. **Analyze all the data collected**. All data is included in the evaluation analysis to get as complete a picture as possible.
2. **Interpret data in a way that reflects the limitations and biases of the data.** When interpreting data, do not hide any limitations or bias in the data collection methods. They are common to all data collection exercises. The best approach is to be transparent about such limitations, bear them in mind when interpreting the data, and note them in any M&E reports.
3. **Plan for an evaluation lessons learned workshop**. Discussing lessons learned offers an opportunity for invited stakeholders to validate the survey information, discuss the findings, and use this knowledge to inform decision-making.

Sharing M&E Information

Experience has shown that managing and sharing learning is important for project success. Consider the following three aspects:

- **Document and disseminate key learning points**. Record the main

points from the LADs and evaluation lessons learned workshops and disseminate them to others. Each staff member will view the information through his or her own personal lens that will enrich the interpretation and learning that takes place among project staff.

- **Report back to communities and engage senior staff in the process.** Ensure that the main learning points are communicated back to community members so that they have a chance to provide new insights to project staff. Senior staff can use site visits to combine observations of project activities, discussions with members of the community, progress report reviews, and project review meetings. In addition to monitoring and communication, field visits are a good time to build relationships.
- **Think creatively about communication.** In addition to written progress and evaluation reports, there is a wide range of reporting options based on stakeholder characteristics and information needs and funding options. *Appendix J: Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation* describes different options.

COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST FOR M&E

The M&E compliance checklist supports your efforts to reach a high standard in your M&E work by raising questions for discussion and critical review. Use the checklist to review the work you undertook in developing the M&E framework and establishing the M&E system and to help guide you through M&E system implementation.

While all projects require good M&E, the size of the project and the resources available must be considered when establishing M&E components and tailoring them to the specific needs of each project.

You will ask the following three questions regarding the M&E system depending on the timing of your review:

1. *Project Design and Planning* – Does your project have an M&E framework?
2. *Project Start-Up* – Does your project have an M&E operating manual?
3. *Project Implementation* – Are staff and other stakeholders using the data generated by your project's M&E system?

Even with a "yes" answer to your review questions, it is important to analyze the quality of the work and plan ways to improve it. The checklist in Table 10.6 can be adapted to your needs.

TABLE 10.6 Compliance Checklist Questions

Does your project have an M&E framework?	Step	Review and Analysis
Does your project proposal include a results framework summarizing the key elements of your project by linking different levels of objectives that show a cause and effect relationship?	10.1.1	
Does your project proposal include a logical planning framework that includes the objectives hierarchy from the results framework, related performance indicators and associated measurement methods, and critical assumptions that underpin the logical upwards progression of the framework?	10.1.2	
Does your project proposal include an M&E narrative that describes the project monitoring system and planned evaluations in a way that the reader can judge the appropriateness of your plans and have confidence in your ability to undertake the proposed M&E activities?	10.1.3	

Does your project have an M&E operating manual?	**Step**	**Review and Analysis**
Does your project's M&E operating manual contain all of the documents needed to implement the M&E system?	10.2.1	
Does your project have a system for listening to and learning from community members and for responding to their concerns in a transparent manner?	10.2.2	
Has your project: Pre-tested the data-gathering forms and report formats using the draft instruction sheets?	10.2.3	
Trained all data-gathering staff on the M&E system?		
Communicated the M&E system to all project staff?		

Are staff and other stakeholders using the data generated by your project's M&E system?	**Step**	**Review and Analysis**
Does your project have a monitoring and separate evaluation database to manage the data that the M&E system is generating?	10.3.1	
Are the appropriate staff members familiar with the *Checklist of Evaluation Tasks*, ensuring well-managed evaluations?	10.3.2	
Are staff members using the M&E data through LADs, evaluation lessons learned workshops, and/or other learning events?	10.3.3	

GLOSSARY

Activities

A logical planning framework term for the functions that need to be undertaken and managed to deliver the project's outputs to targeted beneficiaries and participants.

Baseline (study or evaluation)

Information on the pre-project status of beneficiary conditions against which performance indicators will be compared either at mid-term or end of project.

Communication and Reporting Maps

Diagrams that show the flow of reports and communications to all of the stakeholders, listing responsible persons and dates. If the project involves a consortium, there may be several communication and reporting maps.

Critical Assumptions

Factors that project designers cannot (or choose not to) control but that could endanger project success if assumptions about those factors are incorrect.

Data Flow Maps

Diagrams that show the flow of indicators through the data-gathering forms and report formats and how they are connected. Depending on the scale and complexity of the project, there may be several data flow maps.

Data-Gathering Forms

Forms to be filled out by project participants or staff to collect data.

Detailed Implementation Plan

Project stakeholders sometimes confuse the purposes and processes of project proposals and the more in-depth implementation plans. Project proposals do not contain the level of detail needed by project managers for project implementation and should not be used for this purpose. Once funding is obtained, comprehensive work planning takes place. Some organizations use the phrase detailed implementation plan (DIP) for the document that will guide managers in project implementation. DIPs usually include updated implementation schedules, detailed performance indicator tracking tables and monitoring plans, and other management aids for smooth project implementation.

Evaluation

A periodic, systematic assessment of a project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact on a defined population. Evaluation draws from data collected during monitoring as well as data from additional surveys or studies to assess project achievements against set objectives.

Goal

A logical planning framework term for the longer-term, wider development change in people's lives or livelihoods to which a project will contribute.

Implement

Involves translating plans into performance by carrying out the DIP. Implementation is more than simply following a plan or recipe; it requires much discipline, judgment, and creativity.

Indicator Performance Tracking Table

Table that shows indicator targets and accomplishments for each year of the project.

Instruction Sheets

Sheets that give clear instructions on how to fill out each of the data-gathering forms and report formats.

Intermediate Results

A crucial bridge between lower- and higher-level objective statements in a results and logical planning frameworks. Learning processes are explicitly built-in to project implementation. After implementation has commenced, feedback received from project beneficiaries helps ensure that the project is on track toward achieving its strategic objectives.

Learning to Action Discussions

A time set aside to understand and analyze the data and to discuss their implications for the management of the project.

Logical Planning Framework

A planning tool to assist project design, implementation, and M&E.

M&E System

Well-organized, interdependent activities or components and clear procedures that contribute to a well-defined purpose of M&E within a project. An M&E system integrates more formal, data-oriented tasks (for example, collecting information on logical planning framework indicators) with informal monitoring and communication. It ensures that people responsible for M&E can do their jobs.

Measurement Methods/Data Sources

An important component in logical planning framework. For each performance indicator statement, a brief statement of the project's approach to capturing information is provided. This also serves as a 'reality check' on the proposed performance indicators.

Monitoring

A continuous process of collecting, analyzing, documenting, and reporting information on progress to achieve set project objectives. This information assists timely decision-making, ensures accountability, and provides the basis for evaluation and learning. Monitoring provides early indications of progress and achievement of objectives.

Objectives Hierarchy

The vertical arrangement of different levels of objective statements inresults and logical planning frameworks. One objective level is seen as the means to achieving the next higher-level objective.

Objectives Statements

The first column of the logical planning framework matrix. These statements provide a concise commentary on what the project is aiming to achieve and how it intends to do so.

Outputs

A logical planning framework term meaning the goods, services, knowledge, skills, attitudes, enabling environment, or policy improvements that not only are delivered by the project, but also are demonstrably and effectively received by the intended beneficiaries and participants.

Performance Indicators

Something observed or calculated that acts as an approximation of, or proxy for, changes in the phenomenon of interest.

Project Accountability

The notion that managers are responsible for using intermediate results as feedback to check that their project is on-track toward achieving the strategic objectives.

Project Proposal

A structured, well-argued, and clearly presented document prepared to obtain approval and funding for a proposed project strategy. It stands as the agreement among the relevant stakeholders about the analysis of the situation and the resulting plan of action.

Report Formats

Reports to be filled out by project participants or staff to report data and information to the next level.

Results Framework

An organigram that gives a snapshot of the top three levels of a project's objectives hierarchy in a way that makes it easy to understand the overarching thrust of the project.

Stakeholders

Individuals, groups, and institutions important to, or who have influence over, the success of the project.

Strategic Objectives

The central purpose of the project, described as the noticeable or significant benefits that are actually achieved and enjoyed by targeted groups by the end of project.

Theory of Change

An articulation of how a proposed project strategy will lead to the achievement of the project's Strategic Objectives.

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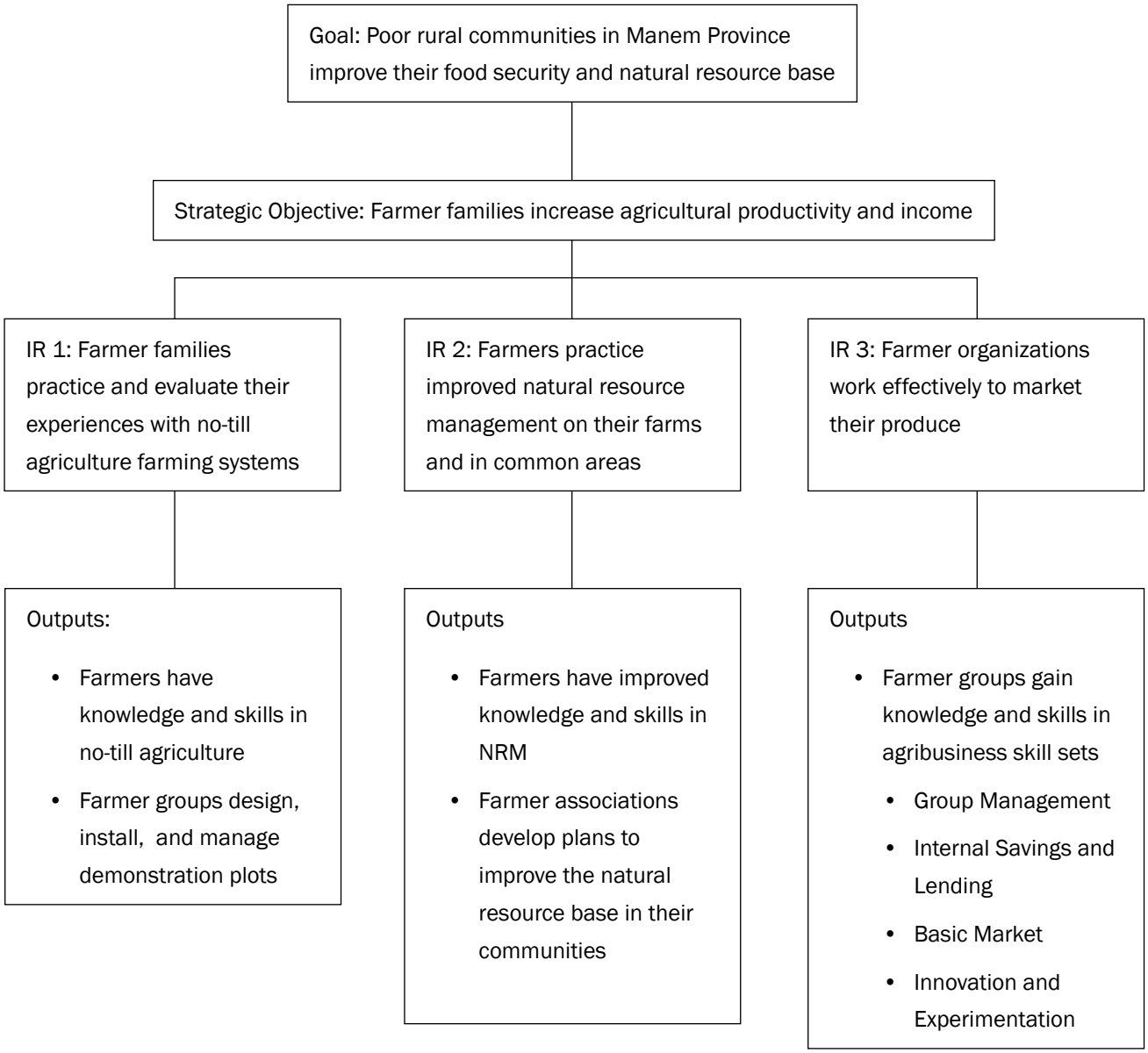
APPENDIX A

RESULTS FRAMEWORK
IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES THROUGH THE NO-TILL AGRICULTURE PROJECT, DR CONGO



APPENDIX B

MASTER TRANSLATOR: COMPARISON OF LOGICAL PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

	WIDER OR LONG-TERM EFFECT	END OF PROJECT EFFECT	INTERMEDIATE EFFECT	OUTPUTS	INTERVENTIONS	
USAID Results Framework	Goal	Strategic Objective	Intermediate Results	(Outputs)	(Activities)	(Inputs)
AusAID	Scheme Goal	Major Development Objective		Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CARE	Program Goal	Project Final Goal	Intermediate Results	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CIDA	Overall Goal	Project Purpose		Results/Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CRS	Goal	Strategic Objective	Intermediate Results	Outputs	Activities	
DANIDA	Goal	Purpose		Outputs	Activities	
DFID	Goal	Purpose		Outputs	Activities	
EU	Overall Objective	Project Purpose		Results	Activities	Inputs
FAO and UNDP	Development Objective	Intermediate Goal		Outputs	Activities	Inputs
GTZ	Overall Goal	Project Purpose		Results/Outputs	Activities	Inputs
World Bank	Goal	Development Objective		Outputs	Component Activities	Inputs

Source: Stetson *et al*. (2004, p. 167), adapted from CARE original

APPENDIX C

CHEAT SHEET FOR WORKING WITH LOGICAL PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

OBJECTIVES STATEMENTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STATEMENTS	MEASUREMENT METHODS/DATA SOURCES	CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS
Goal: This describes the longer-term, wider, development change in peoples' lives or livelihoods to which the project will contribute. This could be in a given region, or in the nation as a whole. Think of the Goal as a larger, longer-term hope or aspiration. ***How to write: Write as a full sentence, as if it has already been achieved. Use the general population of intended beneficiaries as the subject of the sentence.***	Performance Indicator Statements and associated data are drawn from appropriate, pre-existing sources such as Amnesty International, FAO, Freedom House, IFPRI, Transparency International, World Bank, UN, national government reports, and so on.	It is not necessary to complete this box.	It is not necessary to complete this box.
Strategic Objectives (SOs): These describe the noticeable or significant benefits that are actually achieved and enjoyed by targeted groups by the end of the project (EOP). These benefits are achieved due to IR-level changes that have taken place as a result of the Outputs from well-executed Activities. Each SO expresses an aim that is realistic, specific to the project, and measurable. SOs are the central purpose of the project; that is, why it was designed and implemented in the first place. ***How to write: Write as a full sentence, as if it has already been achieved. Use the targeted primary beneficiary group(s) as the subject of the sentence.***	SO indicators reflect the benefit(s) expected to occur for beneficiary subgroups by EOP as a result of behavioral change(s) (achieved at IR-level, prompted by successful delivery and receipt of the project's Outputs).	SO indicators are generally monitored and/or evaluated via field visits as well as mid-term and final evaluations. To measure these benefits against the set targets, EOP results are always compared with the corresponding baseline findings (whether from primary measurement methods or other data sources) in the final project evaluation.	**SOs-to-Goal:** Assumptions that will affect achievement of the Goal concern: (a) the longer-run sustainability of the project; and (b) the contributions of national governments and/or other organizations that may be critical to achieving the Goal.

APPENDIX C

continued

OBJECTIVES STATEMENTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STATEMENTS	MEASUREMENT METHODS/DATA SOURCES	CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS
Intermediate Results (IRs): These state the expected change(s) in identifiable behaviors by participants in response to the successful delivery and reception of Outputs. IR-level responses may show themselves in: • changes in the rate at which project participants adopt new behaviors or skills promoted by the project; • expansion of project reach or coverage; • new ways of organizing or managing systems; • alterations to policy; or • anything else that shows project Outputs being used correctly, or perhaps also innovatively, by the targeted groups. These responses are called "intermediate" because progress at this level is a necessary step toward achieving the SOs. ***How to write:* Write as a full sentence, as if it has already been achieved. Use the targeted primary beneficiary group(s) whose behavior is expected to change as the subject of the sentence.**	IR indicators focus on demonstrable evidence of a behavioral change such as adoption/ uptake, coverage, or reach of Outputs. If the achievement of IRs is less than expected, project managers are accountable for understanding the reasons and making any necessary changes to project implementation.	IR indicators are generally monitored and measured via regular, ongoing data collection, including evaluations (baseline, mid-term, and final). IR indicators normally can be collected only by the project itself because they are specific to behavioral changes in response to interventions in the specific project and its action area. Secondary sources rarely exist at this level. Start with light monitoring. Continue with this light monitoring or, depending on your findings, more targeted monitoring or even special studies. At midterm, conduct a formal evaluation of IRs to that point and promptly make any course corrections indicated by the evaluation (which will include interpretation of any qualitative and quantitative data).	**IRs-to-SOs:** Assumptions at this level are those that emerged from the initial diagnostic work that resulted in the chosen design. If the IRs do indeed show adoption/uptake of the Outputs, what assumptions still underpin achievement of the SOs?

APPENDIX C

continued

OBJECTIVES STATEMENTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STATEMENTS	MEASUREMENT METHODS/DATA SOURCES	CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS
Outputs: These are the goods, services, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or enabling environment that are • delivered to… • demonstrably and effectively received by… …the targeted primary beneficiaries as a result of the Activities undertaken. There may be more than one Output for each IR. ***How to write: Write as a full sentence, as if it has already been achieved. Use the targeted primary beneficiary group(s) receiving the Outputs as the subject of the sentence.***	Output indicators remind project management what and when the project is contracted to deliver. Output indicators allow project management to track what is to be delivered when and, most importantly, to what effect. Project management is directly accountable for delivering the Outputs to those targeted.	Outputs are generally measured in terms of immediate effects of goods and services delivered, such as pre/post-training scores on tests (written or verbal) or practical assessments; organizational development and/or creation of certain structures, documents, or systems; kilometers of roads or number of schools rehabilitated; and so on. Sources for monitoring and evaluating Output indicators typically include programmatic, administrative, and management record-keeping systems.	**Outputs-to-IRs:** Assumptions at this level are those affecting adoption/uptake of the Outputs that are outside the control of project management.
Activities: These describe the functions to be undertaken and managed in order to deliver the project's Outputs to the targeted beneficiaries and participants. There may be more than one Activity for each Output. To avoid over-complicating the Proframes of large projects, only major categories of Activities need to be indicated. A complete Activity Schedule or Detailed Implementation Plan should be provided elsewhere in the project document. ***How to write: Use the specific CRS or partner staff (or other actors) responsible for doing the activity as the subject of the infinitive (e.g., CRS Health staff to do "X").***	Activity indicators are the easiest ones to formulate and collect because they focus on implementation progress as reflected in project and partner staff's work plans, project events, and corresponding budget expenditures. They answer questions such as: • Was the Activity completed with acceptable quality? • Was it completed as planned regarding numbers and types of items purchased and distributed? • Were the meetings held? • Were the numbers and gender of people in the target groups trained or otherwise engaged in defined project activities?	Concentrate on the most important Activities for project management purposes, rather than wasting time and resources analyzing unnecessary details. Activity indicators are typically measured through administrative, management, trainer, and financial tracking and record-keeping systems, supplemented with written summaries and reports about the problems and successes and overall quality of the Activities by trainees, partners, and other participant groups. Activities are generally monitored and evaluated via progress reports and disbursement data.	**Activities-to-Outputs:** Assumptions concern conditions that are outside the direct control of project management but must nevertheless be met for the Outputs to be delivered. The project itself should not be spending money to address any external conditions. If any project funds are allocated to addressing them, then they should be included as Activities.

Source: Stetson et al. (2004, p. 194–196)

APPENDIX D

LOGICAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK: IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH THE NO-TILL AGRICULTURE PROJECT, DR CONGO

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	MEASUREMENT METHODS/ DATA SOURCES (Indicator data will be gathered via the project M&E System as described in the M&E operating manual)	CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS
Project Goal: Poor rural communities in Manam Province improve their food security and natural resource base			
Strategic Objective: Farm families increase agricultural productivity and income	• Percent of project beneficiaries report an improvement in their food security and income. • Percent of households in target communities adopt no-till agriculture on their farms	• Baseline and final evaluation (FANTA quantitative data collection instruments and qualitative data) • Field data	
Intermediate Result 1: Farm families practice and evaluate their experiences with no-till agriculture farming	• Number of farm associations actively engaged in no-till agriculture plot management • Percent of area on which no-till agriculture techniques are applied on home farm • Documentation on no-till agriculture on results of each demonstration plot • Documentation of no-till agriculture and of “best bet” no-till agriculture practices	• Field data and observations; mid-term review and final evaluation • Reports from project technical staff	
Output 1.1: Farmers have knowledge of and skills in no-till agriculture	• Number of participating farmers who actively engage in weekly meetings • Number of participating farmers who actively engage in discussions on no-till agriculture demonstration plot	• Field data and focus groups	
Activities: Caritas staff to train farmers in no-till agriculture techniques and establishing demonstration plots	• Number of farmers in associations trained, disaggregated by sex and location • Number of interested farmers (not in association) trained, disaggregated by sex and location • Number of study tours and participation by farmers, disaggregated by sex and location	• Trainers’ reports • Study tour report and observation	
Output 1.2: Farmer groups design, install, and manage demonstration plots	• 42 paired demonstration plots are in operation for use by extension workers to train project farmers	• Field data	
Activities: 1. Caritas to work with farm associations to establish demonstration plot 2. Caritas to sensitize communities in target area about no-till agriculture planned activities	• Number of farmer groups that agree to work with Caritas on demonstration plots • Number of members in each farmer group, disaggregated by sex and location • Number of sensitization meetings	• Caritas monthly report	Security situation allows for travel by Caritas staff Use of land for demonstration is approved by village chief

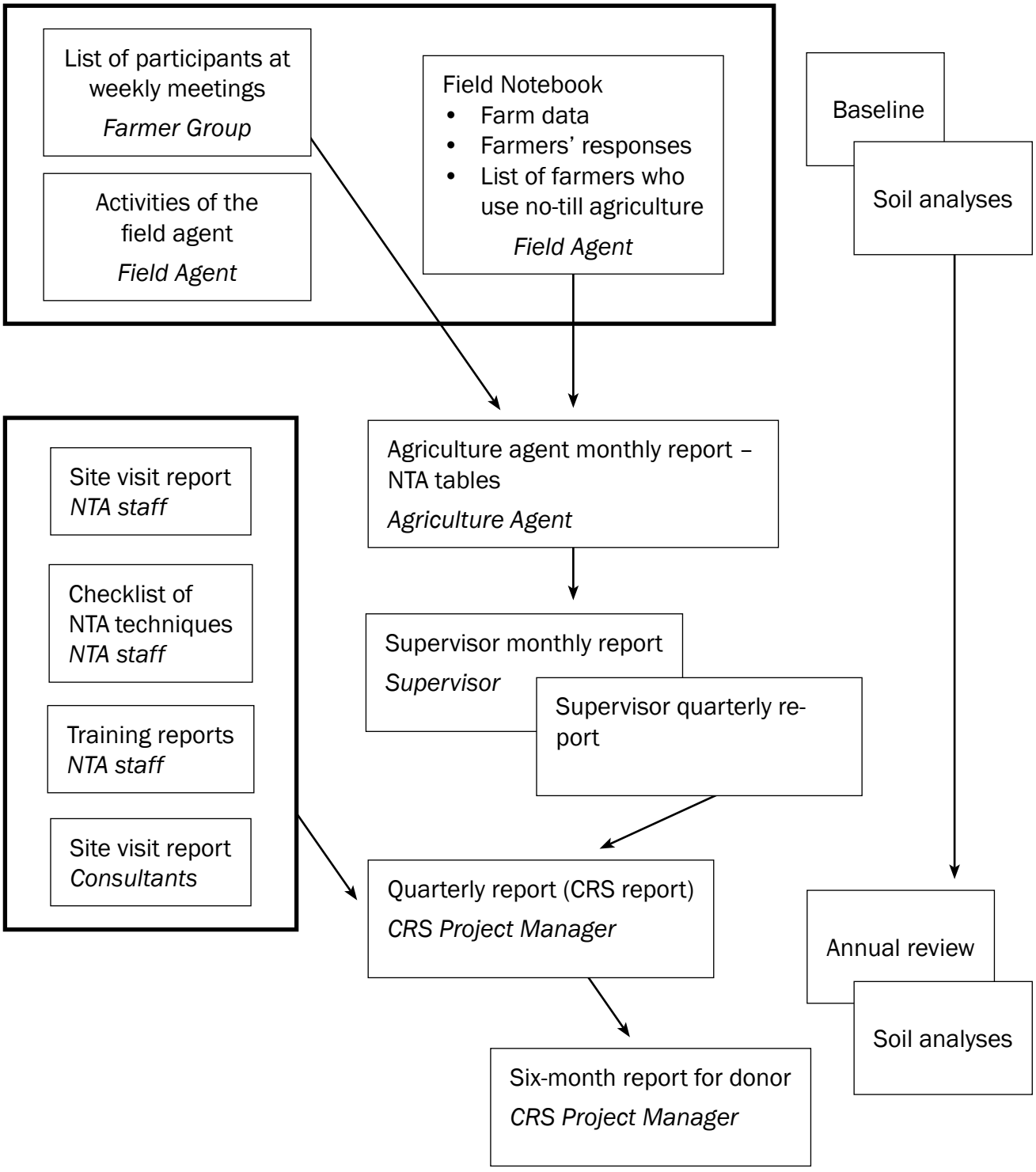
APPENDIX D

continued

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	MEASUREMENT METHODS/ DATA SOURCES (Indicator data will be gathered via the project M&E System as described in the M&E operating manual)	CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS
Intermediate Results 2: Farmers practice improved natural resource management (NRM) on their farms and in common areas	• # of farmers who apply NRM techniques, disaggregated by sex • # of techniques applied • Types of techniques applies • Number of farm associations that apply NRM in common areas • Number of techniques applied • Types of techniques applied	• Field data and mid-term review	Security situation allows for access to individual farms and to common areas
Output 2.1: Farmers have improved knowledge of and skills in NRM	• Number of farmers who understand and appreciate the beneficial effects of NRM	• Trainers' reports	
Activities: Caritas to organize village-based workshops on NRM	• Number of farmers attending village classes on NRM, disaggregated by sex • Number of classes given by village	• Caritas monthly report	
Output 2.2: Farm associations develop plans to improve the natural resource base in their communities	• Number of plans developed	• Caritas monthly report	Use of these areas approved by government
Activities: Caritas to work with farm associations on options for community-based approach to NRM	• Number of sensitization meetings • # of farmer groups, by # of members, disaggregated by sex	• Caritas monthly report	Ownership of common areas is clear
Intermediate Results 3: Farm work effectively to market their produce	• Rank of each farmer group in effectiveness of agrobusiness • Improvement of rank of each over the life of the project	• Agrobusiness effectiveness checklist based on recordkeeping, savings books, profits, documented innovations and interviews, mid-term review, and final evaluation	
Output 3.1: Farm associations that gain knowledge of and skills in agribusiness skill sets • Group Management • Internal Savings and Lending • Basic Market • Innovation and Experimentation	• Number of farmer groups that form into associations for agribusiness • Number of groups that start activities based on training in each of the skill sets	• Trainers' reports and observation • Field data	Each farmer group has trusted staff who are literate and numerate
Activities: Caritas to organize series of sessions with farm associations on agribusiness practices	• Number of sensitization meetings • Number of farmer groups • Number of farmers, disaggregated by sex	• Caritas monthly report	Security situation is stable

APPENDIX E

DATA FLOW MAP: THE NO-TILL AGRICULTURE PROJECT



Source : CRS DR Congo, 2010

APPENDIX F

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DAILY ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

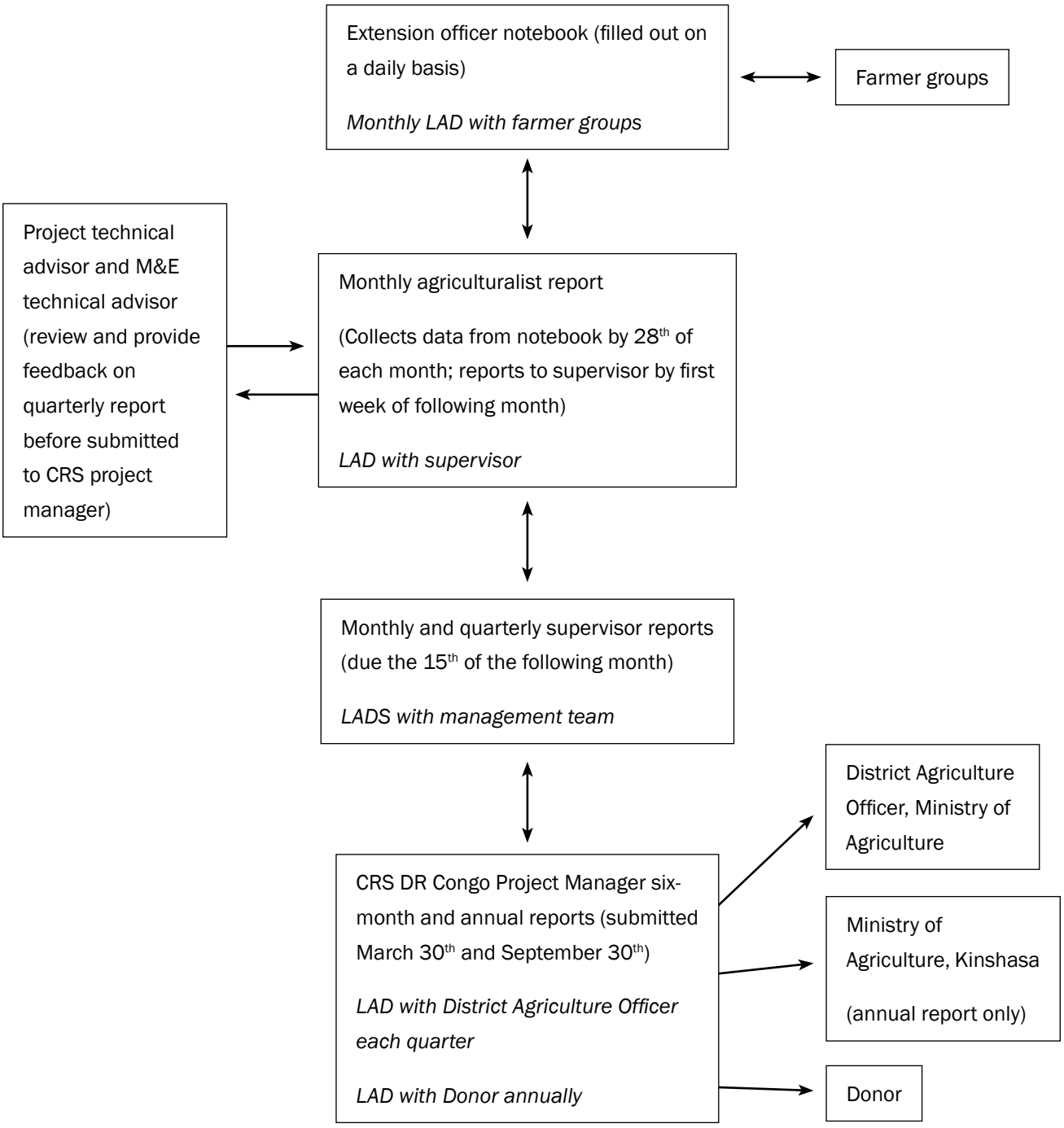
General instructions for filling out the form
• To be filled out by the school teacher in charge • To be filled out on a daily basis, completed once in the morning (8:30am) • Note there is one form for girls and another form for boys • Field agent will summarize at the end of the month and put data in monthly report

Data to be filled in by school teacher in charge	
General information	
Month/year	Enter the month and year in which the form is completed
Page	If the number of pupils exceeds the space on this page, add another form and give it a new page number
School code #	Enter the school number provided by CRS
Class	State the class; complete one set of forms for every class
Data Table	
Number	For the first time in attendance, copy the name from the attendance register
Name	Enter student name (Last Name and First Name) and use the same order for all the following months
Attendance	Write “V” for present and “O” for absent
Total	Add all the days pupils attended school
Dropout	Draw a line and write “dropout”
Transfer	Draw a line and write “transferred” when a pupil moves to another school
Temporary Absent	Write zero (0)
New Intake	Draw a thick line after the current pupil’s name. Write “New Intake” and write the names of new pupils below the line
Total attendance for month	Add the total attendance for all pupils for the month and write the resulting number

Summary table to be completed by CRS
• Attendance average • Number attending less than 50 percent of school days in the month • Number attending fewer than 12 days • Number attending fewer than 10 days • Female form only: Number attending at least 80 percent of school days in the month

APPENDIX G

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING MAP (ABRIDGED): THE NO TILL AGRICULTURE PROJECT



Source: CRS DR Congo, 2010

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE PROMPT QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING TO ACTION DISCUSSIONS

Learning

1. What did we plan for the month? Quarter? Six months?
2. What did we achieve?
   a. Review the data on the monthly data reports
      - What do these data tell us?
      - What don't the data tell us?
      - Who do the data represent?
      - Who don't the data represent?
      - What else do we need to know?

   b. Are these data consistent with our observations during field visits?
   c. Review of successes and challenges. Focus on the facts!

      Successes:
      - What is going well?
      - Why is this happening?
      - So, what does this mean?
      - How does it affect us?

      Issues/Challenges:
      - What problems/issues are we having?
      - Why is this happening?
      - So, what does this mean?
      - How does this affect us?

3. What happened (both good and bad) that we did not expect?
4. How are these results contributing to our objectives?

Action

1. What initiatives are successful?
   a. How can they be reinforced?
   b. Are there other places in the project area that might adopt these initiatives?
2. What initiatives are not going well?
   a. What needs to change?
   b. Should any activities be dropped?
3. If activities change, who needs to be informed and how do we plan this?
4. If activities change, is there a budget to support the work?
5. How best can community members be informed of our current thinking?
   a. What is the best way to inform different members of the community?
   b. What issues/questions are likely to surface?
   c. How should we respond to opportunities and concerns—how much room is there for negotiation?
   d. Which project staff and partners should be involved in follow-up discussions?

Source: Hahn and Sharrock (2010, pp. 43–44)

APPENDIX I

DATA MANAGEMENT: SUMMARY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION DATABASES

	MONITORING DATABASES	EVALUATION DATABASES
Description	A monitoring database tracks project activities, outputs completed, and progress toward objectives. It also houses project management information.	An evaluation database is useful for analyzing assessment or evaluation data and can track progress toward the project's strategic objectives and intermediate results.
Frequency of use	Often on a monthly basis or more frequently. In an emergency response, information may be needed on a daily or weekly basis.	Based on the frequency of assessments and evaluations. Often used at project baseline, mid-term, and end.
Common source(s) of data	• Monthly activity report • Project records • Field monitoring reports	• Household surveys (baseline, mid-term, final) • Community-level surveys (baseline, mid-term, final)
Type of analysis	Sums, frequencies, percents, mean values. For example: • Number of community-wide meetings held • Percent of communities that have elected committees • Number of trainings conducted • Average number (or mean number) of attendees at community meetings	Frequencies, percents, mean values, statistical significance tests, comparisons between sub-groups. For example: • Comparison between the average number of meals per day for female-headed households and the average for male-headed households • Comparison of sources of loans (in percent) for households in the lowest socio-economic group, the middle socio-economic group, and the highest socio-economic group
Technical considerations	Can require minimal technical expertise or advanced technical skills in order to set up and utilize the database, depending on the complexity of the system.	Utilization of the database generally requires advanced analysis skills.

APPENDIX I

continued

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

SOFTWARE PROGRAM	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	RECOMMENDED USE
Microsoft Excel	• The software is readily available. Most staff members have Excel on their computers. • Staff members are more likely to be familiar with the basic functions of Excel than with the other software programs.	• Few staff members are familiar with the Excel functions for more complex analyses (comparisons between groups, etc.) • Excel allows for more error in data entry or while analyzing/using data.	Monitoring databases
Microsoft Access	• The software is readily available. Many staff members have Access on their computers. • Access can be set up to print regular summary reports. • Access can create a data mask so that the data entry page mirrors the forms or questionnaires and only approved options can be entered for each variable. This can reduce data entry error.	• Programming for Access is relatively complex. • Fewer staff members have expertise in creating and maintaining databases with Access than with Excel.	Monitoring databases
SPSS	• SPSS is capable of higher-level analyses. • Data analysis in SPSS is user-friendly.	• SPSS must be purchased separately and thus requires additional funds. • SPSS allows for more error in data entry. • Few staff members have expertise in creating databases and analyzing data in SPSS.	Evaluation databases

APPENDIX J

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Short Cuts

Communicating and Reporting on an Evaluation

Guidelines on Designing an Evaluation Reporting and Communication Strategy

September 2008

Introduction

This edition of *Short Cuts* provides practical instructions on how to design an evaluation communication and reporting strategy using tailored reporting formats that are responsive to audience profiles and information needs. Most donors require midterm and final evaluations, and best practice indicates that these periodic assessments provide the most detailed information about a particular project's progress. An evaluation represents a large investment in time and funds, yet private voluntary organizations (PVOs) often report that evaluation reports are not read or shared, and in some cases, a report's recommendations are not used.

In planning a communication and reporting strategy, it is important to include a variety of reporting formats—tailored to audience information needs—to engage evaluation stakeholders in discussion and decision making. Clear, jargon-free language should be used, accompanied by graphics to help ensure the evaluations are understood, used, and contribute to organizational learning.

4 Steps to Effectively Communicate and Report on Evaluation Results

Step 1 Identify Communication and Reporting Challenges

The first step is to identify communicating and reporting challenges, and, in turn, to learn from the results. These challenges are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Communication and Reporting Challenges	
Challenge	How it affects communicating and reporting
General evaluation anxiety	• Just the word "evaluation" can provoke anxiety among staff and cause resistance, because the results can affect decisions about staffing or resource allocation. • External evaluators, who need time to establish trust and relationships, may increase anxiety.
Failure to plan from the start	• Not communicating regularly with stakeholders can cause disengagement, disinterest, and, ultimately, the non-use of findings. • Evaluation teams can find out too late that no budget was allocated for report production, verbal presentations, or dissemination.
Organizational culture—defined as management operating style, the way authority and responsibility are assigned, or how staff are developed	• Preconceptions are held about the project that are resistant to change. • Staff may view negative or sensitive evaluation results as shameful criticism and resist discussing them openly. • Communication may be inefficient due to the loss of institutional memory because of rapid staff turnover or other reasons. • Leaders who do not want to share performance information in open meetings hinder dissemination of performance findings. • Ongoing communication during an evaluation is inhibited by the organization's dysfunctional information-sharing systems.

Overcoming Challenges

In theory, anxiety and resistance should be lessened by the participatory, utilization-focused evaluation approach and mitigated by a focus on evaluation as dialogue and learning, rather than on judgment and accountability. Treating evaluation stakeholders respectfully, in a way that protects their dignity, will also help to lessen anxiety.

Step 2 Define the Communication Purpose

Once the challenges are identified, the next step is to define the purpose of the communication. How can you best meet stakeholder and other audience needs? First, identify stakeholder and audience needs and then match those needs with the appropriate communication and reporting strategies. Think about why you are communicating with the stakeholders and what you want to communicate. Review the evaluation purpose from the scope of work and consider the expectations that stakeholders express. Then, answer the questions below for each individual or group of stakeholders.

Questions About Stakeholders/Audiences	Answers
1. Do they need to be informed about evaluation decisions? If so, when and for what reason?	☐ To build awareness ☐ To gain support ☐ To show respect
2. Do they need to review interim or final findings? If so, when and for what reason?	☐ To review evaluation progress ☐ To learn and improve ☐ To promote dialogue and understanding among partners
3. Do they need to be involved in decision making? If so, when and for what reason?	☐ To assess the likelihood of future support ☐ To help develop recommendations ☐ To ensure use of the recommendations

Step 3 Select Communication Methods

Now that you have identified the audience needs, the next step is to select the best communication methods. Start by asking the following questions of each individual or group:

Questions for Stakeholders/Audiences	Answers
1. What is their familiarity with the program or the project being evaluated?	☐ Very familiar ☐ Somewhat familiar ☐ Not at all familiar
2. What is their experiences using evaluation findings?	☐ Long experience ☐ Some experience ☐ No experience
3. What is their reading ability?	☐ High ☐ Mid ☐ Low or non-reader (illiterate)
4. What language(s) do they use to communicate?	☐ _____ for writing ☐ _____ for reading
5. How accessible are they?	☐ Easily ☐ With some effort ☐ Isolated

(Adapted from Torres et al. 2005.)

For example, if the group has a high degree of literacy, written communication can be used. If the audience is largely illiterate, however, visual and oral communications will be better communication methods.

Step 4 Develop a communication and reporting strategy

With this assessment of stakeholder characteristics and knowledge of information needs, the next step is to develop a responsive communicating and reporting strategy. The strategy should describe who, what, when, and how to communicate. Use the example in table 2, below, to plan the strategy.

Table 2: Sample Planning Communication and Reporting Strategy Worksheet

Stakeholder and audience group or individual and summary of characteristics and purpose	What information (content) do they need?	What format is best for them?	When do they need it?	Who will prepare and deliver the information?	What are the costs?
Program donor, located in Washington, D.C., needs to review final evaluation report for decision making about future funding	Findings and recommendations	Final evaluation report with executive summary Debriefing meeting to be held at donor offices to present findings, recommendations, and intended actions	June 15th June 30th	Evaluation team to prepare written reports; PVO headquarters staff to prepare debriefing meeting agenda and presentation	Printing costs for 25 copies of written report; travel costs of staff to Washington, D.C., for meeting; and time to prepare and debrief

Reporting Menu of Options

A final written report is an important way to communicate and report on an evaluation, and the full evaluation report should be distributed to program staff, partners, government officials, and donor agencies, but other formats should also be considered for other audiences. Based on stakeholder characteristics and information needs, and funding options, consider other formats such as brochures, debriefings, panel presentations, print and broadcast media, video presentations, drama, poster sessions, working sessions, or electronic communications.

Table 3, below, presents a wide range of reporting options and descriptions of each option. Use table 3 to choose formats that fulfill the evaluation purposes and meet the needs of different stakeholders and dissemination audiences (Patton 1997).

Table 3: Evaluation Reporting Menu

Written Reporting	Verbal Presentations	Creative Reporting	Critical Reflection Events	Reporting Using Electronic Formats
• Final evaluation report • Executive summary • Interim or progress reports • Human interest, success and learning stories • Short communications such as newsletters, brochures, memos, e-mails, postcards • News media communications (print media)	• Debriefing meetings • Panel presentations • Broadcast media (radio or television) • Informal communication	• Video presentation • Dramas or role-plays • Poster sessions • Writeshops	• After-action Reviews • Working sessions	• Website communications • Synchronous electronic communications such as chat rooms, teleconferences, video and web conferences • Podcasts

Sources: Patton 1997; Torres et al 2005.

WRITTEN REPORTING

The final evaluation report presents the full view of the evaluation. It serves as the basis for the executive summary, oral presentations, and other reporting formats, and is an important resource for the program archives. Many program donors have a prescribed format for required reports; follow this format carefully. Usually, at least one draft evaluation report is circulated to stakeholders for comments and additional insights prior to the final report production.

An executive summary is a short version—usually one to four pages—of the final evaluation report, containing condensed versions of the major sections. Placed at the beginning of the final evaluation report, it communicates essential information accurately and concisely. Executive summaries are typically written for busy decision-makers and enable readers to get vital information about the evaluation without having to read the entire report. The executive summary may be disseminated separately from the full report and should be understandable as a stand-alone document.

Condensing 50 pages of a final report into a one-page summary can take considerable time. Use the tips in the box below to make this job easier.

"I'm sorry that the letter I have written you is so long. I did not have time to write a short one."

George Bernard Shaw

Tips for Writing an Executive Summary

- *Read the original document from beginning to end*
- *Start the executive summary with conclusions and recommendations*
- *Underline all key ideas, significant statements, and vital recommendations*
- *Edit the underlined information*
- *Rewrite the underlined information*
- *Edit the rewritten version by eliminating unnecessary words and phrases*
- *Check the edited version against the original document to ensure that the essential information is captured, including the project successes and challenges*
- *Ensure that only information from the original report is included*

Interim or progress reports present the preliminary, or initial, draft evaluation findings. Interim reports are scheduled according to specific decision-making needs of evaluation stakeholders. While interim reports can be critical to making an evaluation more useful, they can also cause unnecessary difficulties if interpreted incorrectly. To avoid this problem, begin interim reports by stating the following:

- Which data collection activities are being reported on and which are not
- When the final evaluation results will be available
- Any cautions for readers in interpreting the findings (Torres et al. 2005).

Human interest, success, and learning stories are different ways to communicate evaluation results to a specific audience. Donors are increasingly interested in using short narratives or stories that put a human face on M&E data.

- **Human interest stories** document the experiences of individuals affected by PVO projects and help to personalize the successes and challenges of PVO work.
- **Success stories** are descriptions of "when, what, where, how, and why" a project succeeded in achieving its objectives.
- **Learning stories** narrate cases of unanticipated project difficulties or negative impacts, how these were identified and overcome, and what was learned that might be helpful in the future to others (De Ruiter and Aker 2008; Long et al. 2006). These stories can be included in the final report or in an appendix.

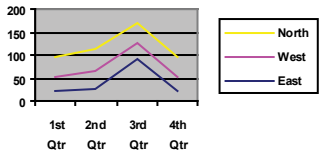
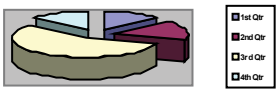
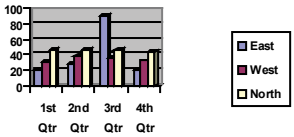
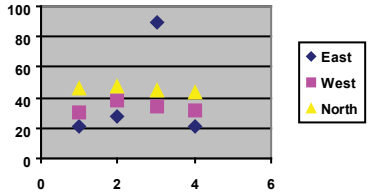
For more information on how to write these stories, consult *Human Interest Stories: Guidelines* and *Tools for Effective Report Writing* (De Ruiter and Aker 2008) and *Success and Learning Story Package: Guidelines and Tools for Writing Effective Project Impact Reports* (Long et al. 2006); and *Writing Human Interest Stories for M&E* (Hagens 2008).

Short communications—newsletters, bulletins, briefs, and brochures—serve to highlight evaluation information, help to generate interest in the full evaluation findings, and serve an organization's public relations purposes. Their format can invite feedback, provide updates, report on upcoming evaluation events, or present preliminary or final findings. However, the short formats may be less useful if the evaluation is primarily qualitative, and when a full description of the evaluation context is critical to interpreting results (Torres et al. 2005). These types of communication use photos, graphs, color, and formatting to be attractive and eye-catching to the reader.

News media communications are another method for disseminating evaluation results. The project can send the evaluation report to the news media, send them press releases on the report findings, or encourage interviews of evaluation team members or evaluation stakeholders (Torres et al. 2005). The news media provides access to a larger audience, such as the general public or a specific professional group.

Use of media can also be tricky—there are no guarantees of what the reporter will write. For this reason, it is important to promote a clear message to the media, to brief the evaluators and stakeholders on the main points to speak on, and to contact the media only after other key stakeholders have reviewed the evaluation findings—no one likes to be surprised by reading about their program in the press.

Table 4: Overview of Graphics

Graphic Types	Information Communicated	Tips
Line Graph 	• Shows trends over time, movements, distributions, and cycles	• Label lines rather than using a legend • Try to use three lines at most • Use different colors or different textures if in black and white
Pie Chart 	• Shows parts of a whole	• Use six or fewer slices • Arrange slices from largest or most important from "12 O'Clock" • Use bright contrasting colors • Label pie slices
Bar Chart/Cluster Bar Chart 	• Compares differences between similar information (for example, percent distribution) • Cluster bar chart compares several items	• Use as few bars as possible • Use color or texture to emphasize data aspects • Place numbers showing bar values at top or inside the bar
Other Charts (flow, time series, scatterplot) 	• Show processes, elements, roles, or parts of a larger entity	• Use white space effectively • Convey the message in the title • Add the data source

<table>
<tr>
<td>Tables
<table><tr><th></th><th>Title1</th><th>Title2</th><th>Title3</th><th>Title4</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></td>
<td>• Describe, tabulate, show relationships and compare
• Conveniently present large quantity of data</td>
<td>• Assign each table an Arabic numeral
• Place the title immediately above the table
• Clearly label rows and columns
• Show the data source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations (diagrams, maps or drawings)
  </td>
<td>• Effectively convey messages or ideas that are difficult to express in words
• Show organizational structures, demonstrate flows
• Show direction
• Use flow charts to show issues
• Use map charts to show results comparable across geographic regions or countries</td>
<td>• Keep it simple—if a lot of explanation is needed, use text instead
• Use illustrations creatively as they help to communicate
• Include a legend to define any symbols used
• Use white space</td>
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Sources: Torres et al 2005; Kusek and Rist 2004; Tufte 1989.

VERBAL PRESENTATIONS

Oral or verbal presentations communicate evaluation progress and findings to stakeholders and other audiences. With this method, audiences can ask questions and communication is more interactive. Oral presentations with facilitated discussions can lead to dialogue among stakeholders and commitment to actions (see critical reflection, below) (Torres et al. 2005).

Debriefing meetings typically begin with a brief presentation, followed by discussion of key findings or other issues. Ongoing debriefing meetings may be held to communicate evaluation progress to program managers. A final debriefing meeting can be held with stakeholders to share and discuss key findings and recommendations from the final evaluation report.

Panel presentations can be used to bring together evaluation stakeholders to present key evaluation findings and recommendations or other evaluation components. Usually composed of three to four panelists, each individual makes a short presentation on some aspect of the evaluation. A moderator then facilitates discussion among panelists and between panelists and the audience (Kusek and Rist 2004).

Broadcast media can be useful when evaluation findings need to be disseminated beyond the primary stakeholders. Radio is a very effective way to disseminate information. Community radio stations—with a mandate for development—provide low-cost production and often have local language translation capacity.

CREATIVE REPORTING

Consider using creative but less-traditional communication formats to report on evaluation findings. These formats can be crucial when reporting information to illiterate stakeholders, as they show respect for local communication traditions such as oral history. Information on how to use video presentations, dramas or role plays, roster sessions, writeshops, critical reflection events, after action reviews, and working sessions are presented below.

Video presentations bring the combined power of visual imagery, motion, and sound. Videos can be shot in digital formats, edited on computers, and disseminated in CD-ROM or digital videodisk (DVD) formats. Although it is advantageous to have a presenter, videos can be distributed and viewed by wide numbers of audiences. Videos are especially useful to do the following (Torres et al. 2005):

- Present qualitative evaluation findings, such as interviews
- Document evaluation processes
- Present evaluation findings about new programs
- Shares evaluation findings with illiterate groups

Video Tips

- *Establish the video purpose and criteria for selecting program events to be filmed.*
- *Obtain permission from program participants before videotaping.*
- *Ensure the videos for stand-alone pieces include sufficient background information about the program and the evaluation.*
- *Consider the intended audience when determining length; shorter videos (20–30 minutes) have a better chance of being included in meeting agendas.*

Dramas or role plays are powerful ways to portray evaluation findings and to illustrate potential applications of recommendations. Torres (2005) describes three theatrical formats where evaluation findings are presented and used to spark dialogue.

1. **Traditional sketches** are developed from evaluation data—especially interviews and focus groups—and may also portray evaluation findings. Actors perform a sketch and then exit. The sketch is followed by a facilitator-guided discussion with audience members.

2. **Interactive sketches** are provocative scenarios that engage audience members in thinking and talking about evaluation issues and findings. Following an interactive sketch, the audience discusses their reactions with the actors, who stay in character, again guided by a facilitator who also provides evaluation data. After the facilitated discussions, actors repeat the sketch, changing it according to the audience discussion outcomes.

3. **Forum theater workshops** use role playing. A facilitator presents evaluation findings; participants can be both actors and audience members. Participants create mini-scenes based on evaluation findings and their own experiences. These are dynamic scenarios; participants can move in and out of acting roles, and actors can change strategies mid-scene. A facilitator then elicits questions and leads discussions about each mini-scene.

or group establish an environment of trust, respect, and collaboration among evaluators and stakeholders. Critical reflection is enhanced when people:

- Ask pertinent questions and display curiosity
- Admit what they do not know
- Uncover and examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions against facts, evidence, and proof
- Listen carefully to others
- Adjust opinions when new facts are found
- Examine successes and problems closely and deeply

After action reviews are a sequence of reflective activities that can be used during an evaluation to process an evaluation team's initial findings or to review progress or obstacles in the evaluation process. As with other critical reflection events, after action reviews work best in a safe environment where people can express their ideas openly; a facilitator poses open questions and leads the group discussions. After action reviews are conducted while memories are still fresh. The facilitator asks a series of sequenced questions as follows and records key points made by the group, such as:

- What was supposed to happen?
- What actually happened?
- Why were there differences?
- What did we learn?
- What were successes or shortfalls?
- What should we do to sustain successes or improve upon shortfalls?

Working sessions with evaluation stakeholders are the hallmark of a collaborative participatory evaluation and can be conducted at any time during the evaluation (Torres et al. 2005). Effective working sessions apply adult learning principles, such as those used for workshops. Guidance for conducting productive working sessions is described in the box, below.

Guidelines to Planning and Facilitating an Effective Working Session

- *Clearly define the session purpose*
- *Prepare an agenda*
- *Choose appropriate procedures—such as brainstorming and small group tasks—and prepare all necessary materials, such as flipcharts or whiteboards and markers to record ideas, handouts, and documents*
- *Set up the meeting room to promote exchange and discussion*
- *Choose a meeting time that is convenient to participants*
- *Share the agenda well in advance and review it at the start of the meeting*
- *Use short games to help participants to get to know each other*
- *Invite participants to set ground rules or norms for how everyone will work together*
- *Clarify roles such as who is facilitating, who is recording ideas, and so on*
- *Use facilitation techniques or hire a competent facilitator to paraphrase comments, synthesize and integrate ideas, encourage diverse viewpoints to surface, manage time, invite the group to refocus when necessary, and build consensus*
- *Balance dialogue with decision making*
- *Plan and articulate next steps*
- *At the end, ask for feedback and use this information to improve the next working session*

Source: Torres et al 2005.

REPORTING USING ELECTRONIC FORMATS

Web sites can be used to disseminate written evaluation reports and evaluation documents. Web sites may be hosted by a donor, a particular development community—relief, peacebuilding, public health, communications, and so on—a PVO consortia, a UN- or government-hosted working group, and/or a resource center. Possible Web postings include reports, video presentations, PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, meeting schedules, and press releases. In the peacebuilding community, a number of Web sites have begun to post evaluations of peacebuilding projects (Lederach et al. 2007).

Synchronous electronic communications, such as web communication systems and conferencing tools, can facilitate collaboration with stakeholders in different locations during all evaluation phases. Chat rooms, teleconferences, videoconferencing, live Web conferencing, virtual meetings, and podcasts are online events and tools that allow stakeholders who may be located across the globe to work together easily (Torres et al. 2005).

- **A chat room** is an area on the Internet where two or more people can have a typed conversation in real time; this method is ideal for routine conversations about data collection or evaluation procedures.
- **Teleconferences** can be arranged through communication service providers. A single number is given to participants to call; speaker phones are used to accommodate many people. Teleconferences are especially useful for discussing and getting feedback on evaluation documents that are distributed and reviewed by participants prior to the call.
- **Videoconferences** are meetings between people at different locations using a system of monitors, microphones, cameras, computer equipment, and other devices. Videoconferences can be used with evaluation stakeholders in place of face-to-face meeting. Note that reliable videoconferencing technology can be costly to use and that technical expertise and information technology professionals are needed to facilitate a successful videoconference.
- **Web conferences** are meetings between people at different locations done through an Internet connection that allows them to view the same document or presentation on computer monitors simultaneously, along with audio communication. Features of Web conferencing software vary and may include a chat room feature or video and/or audio communication. Web conferences can be used for planning, presenting information, soliciting input and reactions, and editing evaluation plans and reports. Web conferences can be arranged through companies specializing in the service or through the Internet.
- **Podcasts** are a series of digital media files that are distributed over the Internet for playback on portable media players (e.g., iPods) and computers. Podcasts enable evaluators to communicate and report information with stakeholders at any time. For example, if a stakeholder is unable to attend a final debriefing meeting, a meeting podcast allows him/her to download the podcast of the event. Although used infrequently at present, this electronic format holds much promise for the future.

DIFFERENT OPTIONS TO COMMUNICATE EVALUATION RESULTS

There are many options in evaluation communication and reporting, and often several techniques or formats are used or sequenced to promote greater dissemination of results. For example, evaluators may draft a written report with preliminary findings, and then hold a working meeting with key evaluation stakeholders to validate findings, followed by a radio program to disseminate the final results. Sequencing a series of communication formats in a skillful way can be very influential in communicating a written report's findings and recommendations (Torres et al. 2005).

See the full module for references and suggestions for further reading.

This edition of Short Cuts was produced in 2008. Please send your comments or feedback to: m&efeedback@crs.org.

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The M&E series is available on these Web sites:

- www.crs.org/publications
- www.foodsecuritynetwork.org/icbtools.html
- www.redcross.org

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