

Steps of Monitoring & Evaluation

1. Conducting a Readiness Assessment to determine the capacity and willingness of the government/organization and its development partners to construct a results-based M&E system. This assessment addresses such issues as the presence or absence of champions, the barriers to building a system, who will own it, and who will oppose the M&E system.

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2. Agreeing on Outcomes to Monitor and

Evaluate addresses the key requirement of developing strategic outcomes that then focus and drive resource allocation and activities. These outcomes should be derived from the strategic priorities (goals).

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3. Developing Key Indicators to Monitor Outcomes, so the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved can be assessed. Developing indicators is a core activity in building an M&E system and drives all subsequent data collection, analysis, and reporting. Both the political and methodological issues in creating credible and appropriate indicators are not to be underestimated.

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4. Gathering Baseline Data on Indicators involves describing and measuring the initial conditions being addressed by the outcomes. It is the first measurement of the indicators and defines the starting point.

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5. Planning for Improvements requires setting realistic targets and recognizes that most outcomes are long-term, complex, and not quickly achieved. It is helpful to establish interim targets that specify how much progress towards an outcome is to be achieved each year (or other time period) and the resources needed. Measuring results against targets can involve both direct and proxy indicators and use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

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6. Monitoring for Results is the administrative and institutional task of establishing data collection, analysis and reporting guidelines; designating who will be responsible for activities; establishing quality control processes; establishing timelines and costs; working through roles and responsibilities; and establishing guidelines on transparency and dissemination of the information and analysis.

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7. Evaluative Information to Support Decision Making focuses on the contributions that evaluation studies and analyses can make throughout this process to assess results and move towards outcomes. Analysis of program theory, evaluability assessments, process evaluations, outcome and impact evaluations, and evaluation syntheses are among the strategies discussed that can be employed in evaluating a results-based M&E system.

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8. Analyzing and Reporting Findings is a crucial step, as it determines what findings are reported to whom, in what format, and at what intervals. This step has to address the existing capacity for producing the information, and focuses on the methodologies for accumulating and assessing information, and preparing analyses and reports.

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9. Using the Findings emphasizes that the crux of the system is not simply generating results-based information, but getting the information to the appropriate users in a timely fashion so that they can take the information into account in making decisions. This step also addresses the roles of development partners and civil society in using the information to strengthen accountability, transparency, and resource allocation procedures.

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10. Sustaining the M&E System recognizes the long-term process involved in ensuring the longevity and utility of an M&E system. Six criteria are seen as crucial to the sustainability of an M&E system: demand, structure, trustworthy and credible information, accountability, incentives, and capacity. Each dimension needs constant attention over time to ensure the viability of the system.