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Monitoring and guidance notes

TACSO toolkit for the delivery of capacity assistance to CSOs for improved management and monitoring of IPA funded projects

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INTRODUCTION

The TACSO project has been assigned the important tasks of supporting and monitoring CSO-led EU-funded (IPA) projects and providing guidance to the CSOs in all aspects of project implementation. The purpose is to raise the standard and performance of EU-funded projects and to improve project management and monitoring, to create learning for the design of subsequent activities and to improve CSOs' accountability to both the donor (EU) and their own project beneficiaries.

The task, as specified, implies two separate and distinct roles which TACSO teams might fulfil:

1. Act as an external project monitor, undertaking brief reviews of project management and performance, including the efficient delivery of activities and outputs according to the project plan and the progress made towards achieving the project objectives. This role would complement the work of existing monitoring mechanisms the EU has put in place at the national level by broadening the range of projects monitored and reaching (a significant proportion of) those which are so far not subject to EU monitoring.

2. Provide capacity-building assistance to CSOs in any or all aspects of their own management and internal monitoring of project implementation, covering monitoring design through the collection of monitoring data and its analysis, to the generation of monitoring outcomes in terms of adaptations in project management, reporting to stakeholders and the creation of learning to be applied in the design of subsequent projects.

The institutional contexts, EU interests and needs, and civil society capacities vary considerably across the eight TACSO countries. On the basis of consultations conducted with the EU in Brussels and EU country delegations, as well as the TACSO civil society needs assessments carried in all countries, TACSO will in most countries perform one or the other of the two monitoring and guidance roles. It was confirmed at a TACSO meeting in Skopje on 10th March 2010 that it would be methodologically inappropriate for TACSO teams to undertake both roles in combination.

This document provides a set of suggested training and consultancy activities, with guidelines on methods and methodologies, for TACSO teams carrying out the capacity-building intervention. It identifies and describes four possible broad approaches to providing CSOs with guidance and capacity support for project management and monitoring, each of which may be delivered over a total of two days (as projected in the ToR), including a full day's input in-house during a project site visit.

The four approaches are all intended to enhance active learning by the participant CSOs and their stakeholders, but they differ in the degree to which they aim to impart new knowledge and skills or to facilitate and enable CSOs to apply already assimilated knowledge and information and /or to facilitate analysis and reflection. There are differences also in when it would be most appropriate to use each method in the implementation cycle and with whom (i.e. does the consultancy target individuals, project teams or wider networks of project participants). Deciding upon a suitable methodology will entail preliminary coordination and discussion with each CSO to gain a sense of the principal challenges or areas of concern of each CSO.

Assistance in all cases should be tailored to the specific needs, structure and content of each participating CSO / project, within the broad results-based, log-frame planning and monitoring methodology adopted by the EU (as set out in the EU PCM Guidelines, 2004).

Descriptions of each approach are supplemented with a list of examples of possible consultancy subjects to indicate the range of issues that might be tackled by the different proposed intervention methods. Brief guidelines are also given on how to organise each type of assistance followed by suggested content of post-assistance reports to the donor and the participating CSO / project.

The final section is a limited collection of technical monitoring tools, training tools and exercises for the practice and facilitation of monitoring processes, as well as a list of useful documentary resources, which may be of use in carrying out the capacity-building interventions.

CONSULTANCY METHODS

Technical trainings

1.1 Description

As a basic form of capacity support for CSOs implementing IPA projects, TACSO could organise one-day workshop trainings in key aspects of monitoring and evaluation design and practice. Training would assist CSOs to carry out more effective project monitoring, with the aim of stimulating improvements in project management, enhancing learning (with concomitant increases in flexibility in project implementation and inputs into final evaluation and subsequent project development), and increasing accountability – both to the EC and to local stakeholders and project participants.

Trainings would be tailored to the needs of each CSO, and might take the form of an explication with opportunities for practice of a single process; e.g. the design of a project monitoring system, or an examination of one or more individual technical or practical elements of the monitoring process, such as defining effective and practicable indicators, or understanding and designing data collection tools.

It would make sense to offer trainings to implementing CSOs as early as possible in each project's lifetime, ideally during the project's preparation or inception phase. As trainings should be undertaken to meet individual need and would, in most cases, be oriented towards practical issues in each CSO's respective project, it would make sense to offer in-house trainings specifically for project teams (and their direct stakeholders, wherever appropriate). Group trainings, however, might be offered to two or more CSOs / projects where identified needs are judged to be of a more generic or of a purely technical nature and there is correspondence in the timing of the project cycles of the CSOs.

A training approach alone does not fulfil the principle of "guidance" for monitoring of IPA projects, identified by the EU and the EU delegations in the IPA region. Wherever possible, therefore, it would be advisable to offer CSOs which had participated in training further practical consultancy for improving monitoring practice at a later date in the form of one of the other methods listed here below

1.2 Examples of training subjects

- Designing a monitoring plan to guide monitoring activities: definition of data to be collected, methods to be used and timing, assignment of responsibilities for data collection, monitoring all levels of the log-frame and collecting data on both process and impact indicators, data management (recording and collating data) and reporting, the analytical process – who, when and methods.
- Designing indicators (checking / refining the original plan): Impact and process indicators, indicators for effectiveness and efficiency, SMART, identifying means of verification.
- Developing baseline information: relevance to indicators, appropriate data collection methods, alternatives if a baseline study is not possible.
- Understanding the log-frame and the levels of monitoring: Distinguishing between efficiency, effectiveness and impact and relating these to the expected results, specific objectives and overall goals, with an examination of supposed causality / project control and how this influences the setting of indicators, the means of verification and the interpretation of monitoring data.
- Qualitative versus quantitative monitoring data: Distinguishing between them, understanding their applications and how to generate analysis from them, understanding data collection tools and practice in their design and application.
- How to enhance learning and improve decision-making through monitoring: methods for action-learning and facilitating reflection, linking management systems to the monitoring process, feeding back analysis and learning to project management in the field and participants and other stakeholders.
- Reporting and feedback: Identification of recipients of monitoring reports (direct beneficiaries, donors, board, wider community ...) and their expectations, establishing reporting formats, setting a reporting timetable and individual responsibilities.

1.3 Organisation

- TACSO teams would establish early contact with implementing CSOs to initiate a self-assessment of project monitoring needs.
- Brief e-mail questionnaire sent to CSOs to gather basic information on project preparations for monitoring implementation and to focus CSOs' attention on the issues involved.
- Telephone discussions with CSOs, using the answers of the questionnaire, to identify in more detail CSOs training needs and prioritise those needs (or confirm that training is not required).
- Recruit STE or allocate qualified TACSO team members to carry out the training.
- Arrange training with CSO.
- Trainers prepare training and materials (having received any relevant project documentation from CSO). ½ - 1 day.
- Training undertaken. Process evaluation carried out by trainers as the end of each session. 1 day.
- Follow-up: Feedback reporting by trainers to each CSO. TACSO teams would also carry out a follow-up evaluation exercise by e-mail and /or telephone after 6- 8 months to assess the extent to which knowledge gained in trainings has been implemented, to gain feedback on any problems encountered by implementing CSOs in applying the training, and to gather information on the whole project monitoring process with special emphasis on identifying further challenges CSOs may be encountering with monitoring and reporting. This exercise would also serve as a means of identifying appropriate areas for the extension by TACSO of further assistance to CSOs for project monitoring by means of consultancy or process facilitation (as detailed below).

1.4 TACSO reporting requirements

- TASCO teams will report to the EU on the completion of each training event. The report will detail
    - the main points of each CSO /project's self-assessment regarding its monitoring capacities and the challenges it faces;
    - a description of the training provided, including its content and methodology;
    - a description of any outputs resulting from the training (plans, tool designs etc) and any agreed ;
    - a summary of the process evaluation undertaken at the end of the training.
- TACSO teams will also provide participating CSOs with a full training report, detailing the reason for the training, the main content, the outputs, the results of the end-of-training evaluation and, most importantly, an agenda of actions to be carried out (as agreed by participants in the training).

Process consultancy conducted through site visits

2.1 Description

The term "process consultancy" here describes a relatively informal and flexible means of providing face-to-face advice to implementing CSOs and their project teams. TACSO teams or STE's would advise CSOs in the context of individual or team discussions, and also, possibly, consultations with project target groups, on any matters of concern regarding project monitoring and reporting to the donor or providing feedback to direct stakeholders.

This approach is particularly suitable for advising CSOs or project managers who understand what needs to be done to carry out effective monitoring, but who are facing difficulties with the implementation of their monitoring plans – on *how* it should be done. It is also a suitable methodology for enhancing the analytical component of project monitoring.

The aim of TACSO advisors would be to provide methodological input to CSOs' monitoring practice, assisting each CSO to understand the monitoring process better, and to adapt or change their practice according to the analysis developed through the consultancy process. While TACSO teams would be expected to provide CSOs with tools, methodological tips, case study examples and clarification of any formal requirements the donor may have concerning monitoring and reporting (or clarifications of technical terminology in use), it would not be the role of TACSO to provide concrete or definitive solutions to monitoring challenges. Rather, TACSO advisors should adopt an exploratory approach to assist CSOs identify and fully define the challenges they face and their underlying causes and then to establish alternatives to overcoming these challenges.

TACSO's role here, therefore, in addition to, and beyond that of providing technical information, is to act as a change agent. That is, to assist and support the CSO, or "problem owner," to implement changes in its monitoring practice and to learn to continue monitoring more effectively in the future.

The guiding methodological principles of the process consultancy should be:

- Assist the implementing CSO in fully defining the problem;
- Help the CSO determine the cause;
- Stimulate debate and provide input (suggestions, information, technical advice) to assist the organisation make changes or select new methods;
- Encourage the CSO to learn from the consultancy process; i.e. to be able to identify and solve (monitoring) problems better in the future.

An initial problem analysis, or identification of the issues of concern to the CSO, may be undertaken prior to the consultancy via e-mail and / or telephone by means of simple questionnaires and discussion. The information gained at this point will enable the TACSO advisors to prepare fully the site visit, including a quick review of project design and monitoring plans. However, the face-to-face consultancy would proceed from a discussion / exercise /

facilitation designed to explore the issues involved in more depth, before proceeding to identifying possible solutions.

Consultancy methods might include simple probing with repeated use of questions as to *how* and *why*, as well as well as participatory tools for problem identification and problem solving (some of which are included below in the section on tools and resources).

As process consultancy is oriented on practice and addressing practical challenges as they occur, TACSO might consider deploying it at any time during project implementation after an initial period of establishing and testing monitoring systems.

2.2 Examples of process consultancy subjects

- Addressing problems with the delivery and quality of monitoring data from the field. Many projects face serious challenges with securing the timely and ordered delivery of monitoring data from partners and participants from the field. In addition, ensuring consistency in the application of the chosen data collection methods, the type of information recorded and the volume, as well and the quality of the data recorded by field monitors / participants often present challenges.

- Dealing with perceived shortfalls in the both data management and the analytical process. Monitoring staff often struggle to collate and streamline considerable amounts of monitoring data received from the field. A common methodological challenge is to ensure that information is relevant and is applicable to indicators selected. In addition, information will arrive from different stakeholders, according to different time schedules and will be in a variety of formats, both qualitative (such as, observation notes, interview transcripts, media surveys etc) and quantitative (survey results, records of attendance at events, economic statistics etc).

- Developing, refining and checking performance indicators which will have been pre-defined in the project document and log-frame and selecting the most appropriate and efficient (i.e. rational in terms of project resources and time available) means of verifying the selected indicators. What seems logical and feasible at the time of project development sometimes turns out to be unsuitable, unworkable or simply too exacting in terms of effort and resources.

- Deciding upon changes in project management or even identifying adaptations to project design on the basis of an analysis of monitoring data. Analysis may indicate that the project's chosen strategies or individual activities are unlikely to achieve expected results and ultimately will not contribute to realising the projected outcomes. Identifying appropriate adaptations to the implementation work plan is rarely a straightforward process. In addition, adapting the work plan and log-frame may require the CSOs to seek donor approval by means of an official addendum to the grant agreement. CSOs may be daunted by this possibility and may also not understand the process for obtaining the donor's consent. In such cases TACSO teams could be of assistance in both mediating relations with the donor and assisting the CSOs in making a formal request to adopt modifications to the project design.

2.3 Organisation

- Following initial early contact by TACSO teams with implementing CSOs concerning general project monitoring needs (see above section on technical trainings), TACSO teams would make contact with CSOs early on in their project implementation phase (perhaps 3 or 4 months after the completion of the inception period). Brief informal enquiries could be made to establish the status of CSO monitoring. Is a monitoring plan in place? Is monitoring taking place? How does the CSO assess its monitoring process including the data collection, its management, and data analysis, and also reporting?
- If the CSO expresses concerns or uncertainties regarding its monitoring practice, TACSO could offer process consultancy to the CSO and initiate a preliminary distance needs assessment via e-mail or telephone, using a brief written questionnaire or a small list of open oral questions to explore the main issues already identified by the CSO.
- Recruit STE or allocate TACSO team members, practiced in facilitation and with M&E expertise.
- Arrange site visit and process consultancy, making sure that appropriate staff members notified and also direct stakeholders if relevant.
- Consultants prepare site visit by acquainting themselves with the project documentation and any available monitoring data and reports, designing questions and selecting a collection of possible tools to be used, as well as collecting technical information and case studies / examples which might be disseminated during the visit. ½ - 1 day.
- Consultancy undertaken. Decisions and results of analyses fed back by the consultant at the end of the session. An agenda for next steps by the CSO clarified. A brief informal evaluation undertaken to identify significance of the consultancy to participants. 1 day.
- Follow-up: Feedback reporting by consultants to each CSO. TACSO teams should also carry out a follow-up evaluation exercise by e-mail and /or telephone after 3 to 6 months to see if CSOs have acted upon the decisions they made during the consultancy, to enquire whether the consultancy has assisted the CSOs overcome their monitoring challenges and to provide any further advice (from distance) that may be sought.

2.4 TACSO reporting requirements

- TASCO teams should report to the EC on the completion of each process consultancy. The report might detail:
    - the results of each CSO's preliminary identification of monitoring challenges;
    - a description of the consultancy provided, including its objectives, content and methodology;
    - a description of the consultancy results, including problem analysis and the identification of possible solutions, as well as decisions taken by the CSOs concerning adaptations to project monitoring, including a time schedule of planned actions;

- further recommendations / endorsements by the consultant for any actions by the CSO which require donor consent or assistance;
- a summary of the process evaluation undertaken at the end of the consultancy.

- TACSO teams will also provide the CSO with a post-consultancy report summarising the consultancy's purpose, its content and methodology, and its results in terms of analysis and decisions taken, with an agenda for adaptations to be implemented.

Project review via participatory workshops

3.1 Description

This activity entails the facilitation of CSO project teams in cooperation with representatives of project participants and other direct stakeholders by means of a participatory workshop. The activity's aim would be to carry out a review of any aspect of project design, implementation and progress towards achievement of results, objectives (and, in theory, impact), as well as the potential sustainability of those achievements. It would be a discrete, interim assessment event, separate from the everyday activities, and carried out after a sufficiently long period of project implementation (e.g. after 12 months or mid-term) to allow an in-depth qualitative assessment of project performance. Corresponding to the monitoring task of ongoing and regular project review specified in the EC project cycle management guidelines, its function would be not only to take stock, or check progress, but also to diagnose problems and identify project adaptations and management improvements and to update plans accordingly.

As the focus here is on assessing *project performance*, it is very important that the activity includes significant participation from project target groups and other direct stakeholders. However, the process itself, including collective analysis and joint decisions arising from the analysis, is a form of action learning (or learning-by-doing) which should contribute to the management (and planning and implementation) capacity of both implementing CSO and the project itself.

TACSO's role would be first and foremost as a facilitator of the group process, by mediating discussion, stimulating reflection, creating appropriate focus and explaining, if necessary, technical terms and jargon. Direct intervention in the form of the supply of technical information, provision of comparisons and examples from other settings or the giving of direct advice and suggestions, should be used sparingly. Methodologically, therefore the workshops should be:

- Inclusive and participatory;
- Non-technical in nature;
- Based on a genuine dialogue between CSOs and their stakeholders;
- Non-determined (by project plans and participants' expectations) and open to new ideas arising out discussion and analysis;

TACSO advisors would plan a half-day workshop agenda, lasting perhaps up to 6 hours in total, on the basis of prior informal discussion with the implementing CSOs. A possible way for TACSO to assist CSOs identify appropriate issues for review might be to ask them to reflect on areas covered by evaluations and mid-term reviews under the OECD / DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. With the proviso that it will almost certainly be too early in the project cycle to consider issues concerning impact (and by extension most probably sustainability), CSOs should be encouraged to select areas which have so far not received sufficient attention in the monitoring process, or where doubts exist as to project performance.

Workshop methods might include any of the wide range of participatory tools designed for stimulating discussion, group analysis and decision making. Full use should be made of the project documentation, especially the log-frame and monitoring reports, tested against the opinion, perceptions and knowledge of the workshop participants.

It is suggested that after each workshop, TACSO immediately holds a short one- or two-hour meeting with CSO project teams in order to provide them advice and technical guidance on implementing decisions agreed on in the workshop – both setting an agenda for action and deciding on how to carry out decisions.

3.2 Examples of subjects for participatory workshops

- Checking the continued relevance of the project and its objectives, by re-visiting the situation analysis or problem statement and testing it against current stakeholder needs and interests. Considerable time, possibly as much as two years, will have elapsed since project conception and it development. During that time significant changes may have occurred in both the environment and the target groups, making adaptations to the project's overall design desirable. In particular, institutional factors, such as policy frameworks at both national and local levels, and relationships between the project's range of stakeholders, are likely to have developed (in ways which might be either advantageous or detrimental to the project's conception and objectives). Political events, such as changes in administrations, often impact on policy as well as the way government relates to other social actors. Unexpected developments within stakeholder organisations may have altered their capacity or willingness to work with the project. The initiative's overall relevance may also be affected by wider macro political or economic processes - the global recession and its impact on government spending and economic opportunity being just one example. Often the appearance or projection of other development projects in the project's field of activity – undertaken locally or in parallel in other locations – will have a bearing on a project's overall relevance by raising issues concerning possible complementary effects or areas of duplication.

- Reviewing the appropriateness (relevance once again) of project activities and their combination in terms of their potential to achieve results (project logic), their feasibility (is their successful execution practicable?) and their methodological approach (are they delivered in ways which are suitable to target groups' needs and capabilities? Do they involve appropriate levels of participation? Etc). This exercise is closely related to a wider review of relevance (as above), but proceeds from the assumption that overall relevance is confirmed.

- Assessing the delivery of project activities by the project team. This exercise would not only check that activities are carried out in a timely and efficient manner, according to the log-frame, but that they are delivered in a way which is appropriate to the direct stakeholders. Is there sufficient communication between the CSO and its target groups and do the target groups have the opportunity to participate in the activities' planning and delivery? Are activities considered useful and beneficial by direct stakeholders? Are activities methodologically appropriate? That is, are they understandable to stakeholders and do they provide stakeholders opportunities for meaningful participation and the practical application of new learning and knowledge?

- Re-considering the project design in light of the experience to date of project implementation and the results of routine monitoring, by means of a detailed examination of the log-frame. The emphasis here would be on confirming the logic or otherwise of the chain of causation set out in the log-frame, extrapolating and hypothesising from the results achieved so far by the project. An important consideration in this exercise, one which is often overlooked or poorly executed at the planning stage, is confirming or refining the assumptions of the log-frame (which provide the diagonal dynamic in the log-frame logic), using current understandings of the project context or institutional environment.

- Reviewing the project's progress towards achieving its objectives; that is its expected outcomes. This process could proceed from a review of the accomplishment of concrete results or outputs and then attempt to identify how and if these results are being used by project stakeholders, or how they are stimulating changes in practice and attitudes within stakeholders. Development objectives are usually defined in the log-frame as completed states according to the SMART criteria. However, in reality the expected outcomes entail changes in behaviour, relationships, attitudes and activities of targeted stakeholders which are ongoing and difficult to capture. Development is a process enacted by people and their organisations. Assessing progress towards a project's objectives, therefore, would involve identifying behavioural changes, assessing their "quality" or significance and tracing their causal link to project activities and results.

- Re-defining performance indicators and their means of verification, on the basis of desired adaptations to project design previously identified by workshop analysis of project relevance or progress towards objectives. The workshop environment ensures that project participants play a key role in identifying the indicators; that is, they establish the markers of *their project development objectives*. Their participation would also help ensure that the means of verification – the monitoring tools – are appropriate and feasible.

3.3 Organisation

- TACSO teams would contact implementing CSOs at a point approaching the project mid-term, or at a suitable juncture, such as near the completion of a distinct implementation phase. CSOs would be invited to suggest areas for review, with the assistance of explanations by TACSO of the purpose and methodological format of a review workshop. Questions to ask the CSO which would affect whether it chooses to take up this option or not include: Has the CSO

already established mechanisms to conduct periodical participatory reviews, or has it plans to conduct such a review? Has the CSO has made provision for an external mid-term evaluation, which would cover and go well beyond the scope of a review workshop? Are stakeholders already included in a meaningful way in project management and monitoring bodies, such as a project steering committee? Has the CSO conducted any internal reviews at any stage of project design? Does project monitoring go beyond the verification of the delivery of activities and outputs as specified in the log-frame and action plan (i.e. does monitoring address progress towards outcomes and impact in the log-frame?)?

- On confirming interest in a workshop review, TACSO would agree the broad purpose (content areas) of the review with the CSO and establish a provisional date.
- Recruit STE or allocate TACSO team members, practiced in facilitation and with M&E expertise.
- Make firm arrangements for the workshop. This would largely be the responsibility of the implementing CSO, which would coordinate its various stakeholders.
- Liaising with the CSO, the workshop facilitator(s) would prepare the workshop, with a detailed agenda.
- Workshop undertaken and follow-up consultancy with the CSO project team. Decisions and results of the workshop should be fed back to participants at the end of the session. A brief evaluation exercise undertaken to identify significance of the consultancy to participants. An agenda for any adaptations to project design and approach, as well as monitoring methods established with the CSO. 1 day.
- Follow-up: Feedback reporting by the workshop facilitator(s) the CSO. TACSO teams should also carry out a follow-up evaluation exercise by e-mail and /or telephone after up to 3 months to see if CSOs have adopted any planned adaptations and to provide any further advice (from distance) that may be sought.

3.4 TACSO reporting requirements

- TASCO teams should report to the EU on the completion of each workshop. The report might include:
    - a description of the workshop, including its objectives, content and methods used;
    - a description of the workshop results, including, where relevant, qualitative assessments of project relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, as well challenges identified to the successful implementation of the project as planned, as well as any adaptations agreed upon by the workshop. This information, although limited in scope, will serve the EU delegations as monitoring data relating to overall project progress;
    - a schedule of project adaptations and changes in monitoring practice agreed upon by the CSO;
    - a summary of the results of the evaluation undertaken at the end of the workshop.

- TACSO teams will also provide the CSO with a post-workshop report summarising the workshop's purpose, its content and methodology, and its results in terms of analysis and decisions taken, with an agenda for adaptations to be implemented. It would be the responsibility of the CSO to relay this information to its project stakeholders.

Project team monitoring workshops

4.1 Description

The idea behind providing project monitoring teams a workshop setting in which to examine and refine their monitoring practice, is to address problems of coordination and efficiency in the *monitoring system* – the monitoring plan, the relationships and communication between the various project staff, the coordination of data collection and recording, the organisation and execution of data analysis, the linking of analysis with project management and how data and analysis is used in reporting and improving project accountability. Participants at the workshop should include all CSO project staff members who play a role in the monitoring process and are involved at any level in the above-mentioned monitoring tasks.

A team workshop is similar in its application to the process consultancy described above (item 2), but it differs from this relatively informal form of facilitation by providing a more inclusive and more structured approach, under tighter guidance of the consultant / facilitator, which enables a broader overview of the monitoring process, as well as an opportunity to "test" or "practice" team tasks using either the actual project or imagined, "as if" scenarios.

This method is particularly suited to projects implemented by coalitions or networks of CSOs (and public-private partnerships) in which coordination of project activities, achieving consistency in approach and quality standards, as well as efficient flows of information and the execution of management decisions inevitably create challenges.

TACSO's role would be to guide project monitoring teams to analyse their own monitoring practice, particularly its systematic aspects, in order to both diagnose problems and also identify the underlying factors to areas of practice which are considered to work well, with the overall aim of devising, testing and ultimately instituting improvements to the monitoring system. Central to this activity is the facilitation of improved communication within the monitoring team and between the project partners.

Workshop methods might include any of the wide range of participatory tools designed for stimulating discussion, group analysis and problem-solving. However, a fruitful approach here might be to proceed from problem-solving or decision-making exercises to a workshop practice of the relevant monitoring process, which would be designed in a way that would simulate the flow of information and decisions between the project partners and the different levels of project management. Wherever possible project documentation, especially the log-frame, the monitoring plan and monitoring data and reports should be used throughout the workshop.

Workshops could be of up to a full day in duration and might take place at any time during the implementation period proper, once regular monitoring has been established.

4.2 Examples of subjects for participatory workshops

Any of the subjects listed under process consultancy (item 2) might be addressed by means of team workshops. There would be an added case for conducting a workshop in the case of projects where the challenges concerned are complicated by poor coordination between the project partners and there are few opportunities to work together face-to-face.

- Carrying out an overall review of a monitoring system, or designing a monitoring system, if it has not yet been specified. Through analysis of the relationships and tasks involved, the aim would be to revise or establish full specifications for monitoring the project: definition of the purpose of the monitoring system (accountability, management, learning etc) and what is to be monitored (levels in the log-frame); a description and clear definition of the different tasks to be undertaken from the field upwards and how they are to be carried out, including data collection, analysis, management adjustments, reporting (to all stakeholders); clear definition and allocation of responsibilities to individual project officers; clear mapping of information flows and the direction of decisions made, and a description of decision-making bodies and processes.

The following subjects comprise more detailed reviews of individual elements of the overall monitoring system:

- Refining the process of collecting and recording monitoring data to ensure that methods are appropriate to indicators and acceptable to project stakeholders, that the same methods are applied consistently across the project for the same purpose (including timing and sampling from project stakeholders), that everyone in the project shares the same understanding of the indicators and their significance, that different monitors apply the same “filters” to raw data when recording them (i.e. that similar content, detail and volume of information is recorded) and that there is a unified system for recording monitoring data which enables comparison and time-efficient analysis.
- Reviewing and harmonising data collection methods. This overlaps with the above, but focuses in more detail on how data are collected in order to ensure that monitoring is carried out efficiently and to acceptable standards in the same way across the project. Different data collection methods would be analysed and tested for their appropriateness, both methodologically and in terms of time and resources. Time would be allowed for monitoring teams to practice the different methods, while peer assessment would provide a means of identifying areas to be improved and also a means of comparison within the team, so that practice may be harmonised.
- Establishing a rational and effective system for analysing monitoring data. There are no hard and fast rules concerning this; analysis may take place at a number of levels in the project structure in a process of sequential filtering out of the particular in favour of more generally applicable information and the identification of trends and patterns. In some cases, analysis at

each level is undertaken by individuals, but in others it might be a collective process. On the other hand, some projects are structured more horizontally and monitoring analysis is conducted on fewer levels, closer to the "field" and may involve a greater number of project staff and even project stakeholders. Design of appropriate structures and systems for analysis, which are intimately linked to project management and reporting requirements, is rarely given sufficient time. Workshops could be devoted to devising a system for data analysis appropriate to both management and reporting needs. Workshop time would be allowed for project teams to practice different structural arrangements, as well as different methods of data analysis.

- Sharpening analysis to generate reporting and project management requirements. A common challenge is to draw appropriate conclusions and generate knowledge from the raw monitoring data which can be applied to project management, and used for reporting and ultimately to create learning to be applied in the new project cycles (evaluation, project identification and design). Adding meaning to quantitative data through interpretation is a particular challenge, as too is the process of prioritising and attributing weight in a consistent way to rich and varied qualitative data received from the range of stakeholders. A workshop might be organised to establish project approaches to analysing monitoring material which could include: practice and comparison of individual and group analysis, the application of analytical tools (such as ranking matrices or scoring systems), testing the appropriateness of knowledge gained through analysis for management, reporting (and future learning), and converting analysis into learning and recommendations.

4.3 Organisation

- TACSO teams would make contact with CSOs early on in their project implementation phase (in the first 3 or 4 months after the completion of the inception period). Brief informal enquiries could be made to establish the status of CSO monitoring. Is a monitoring system in place? How does the CSO / project management assess the coordination of monitoring tasks and also the efficiency and quality of the implementation tasks, including consistency across throughout the project?
- If the CSO identifies concerns regarding the coordination and management of monitoring, TACSO could offer a team workshop and initiate a preliminary distance needs assessment via e-mail or telephone, using a brief written questionnaire or a small list of open oral questions to explore the main issues already identified by the CSO (note the overlap in this process with the needs assessment for process consultancy. Closer definition of needs may determine whether a workshop or process consultancy is a more appropriate means of providing support).
- Recruit STE or allocate TACSO team members, practiced in facilitation and with M&E expertise.
- Arrange site visit and workshop. This task is mainly the responsibility of the CSO / project management.

- Consultants prepare workshop by acquainting themselves with the project documentation and any available monitoring data and reports, designing structured participatory workshop processes and exercises. ½ - 1 day.
- Workshop undertaken. Decisions and results of analyses fed back by the consultant at the end of the session. An agenda for next steps by the CSO clarified. A brief informal evaluation undertaken to identify significance of the consultancy to participants. 1 day.
- Follow-up: Feedback reporting by consultants to each CSO. TACSO teams should also carry out a follow-up evaluation exercise by e-mail and /or telephone after 3 to 6 months to see if CSOs have acted upon the decisions they made during the consultancy, to enquire whether the workshop has assisted the CSOs overcome their monitoring challenges and to provide any further advice (from distance) that may be sought.

4.4 TACSO reporting requirements

- TASCO teams should report to the EU on the completion of each workshop. The report might detail:
    - the results of each CSO's preliminary identification of monitoring challenges;
    - a description of the workshop, including its objectives, activities and methodology;
    - a description of the workshop's results, including conclusions of individual exercise and any decisions taken by the CSOs concerning adapting systems or the implementation of specific tasks;
    - a summary of the process evaluation undertaken at the end of the consultancy.
- TACSO teams will also provide the CSO with a post-workshop report summarising the workshop's purpose, its content and methodology, and its results in terms of analysis and decisions taken, with an agenda for adaptations to be implemented.

TOOLS and RESOURCES

RESOURCES

EC Project Cycle Management Guidelines:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm

OECD / DEC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-based Management:
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf

OECD DAC Principles for Evaluations of Development Assistance:
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/12/2755284.pdf

OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance:
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/21/39119068.pdf

EC Evaluation unit web pages on evaluation toolbox:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/tools/too_mix_en.htm

What is a problem diagram? - EC Evaluation unit:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/tools/too_dpm_def_en.htm

The Logical Framework Approach: Handbook for Objectives-oriented Planning, NORAD, 1999:
http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=109408

Civicus Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit:
http://www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf

TOOLS

The Relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation

- Both geared towards learning – drawing conclusions and lessons from what you are doing and how you are doing it.
- Both concern measurement of the following:
    - Efficiency
    - Effectiveness
    - Impact

Although it is *often believed* that monitoring concentrates on activities and outputs, rather than objectives and impacts.

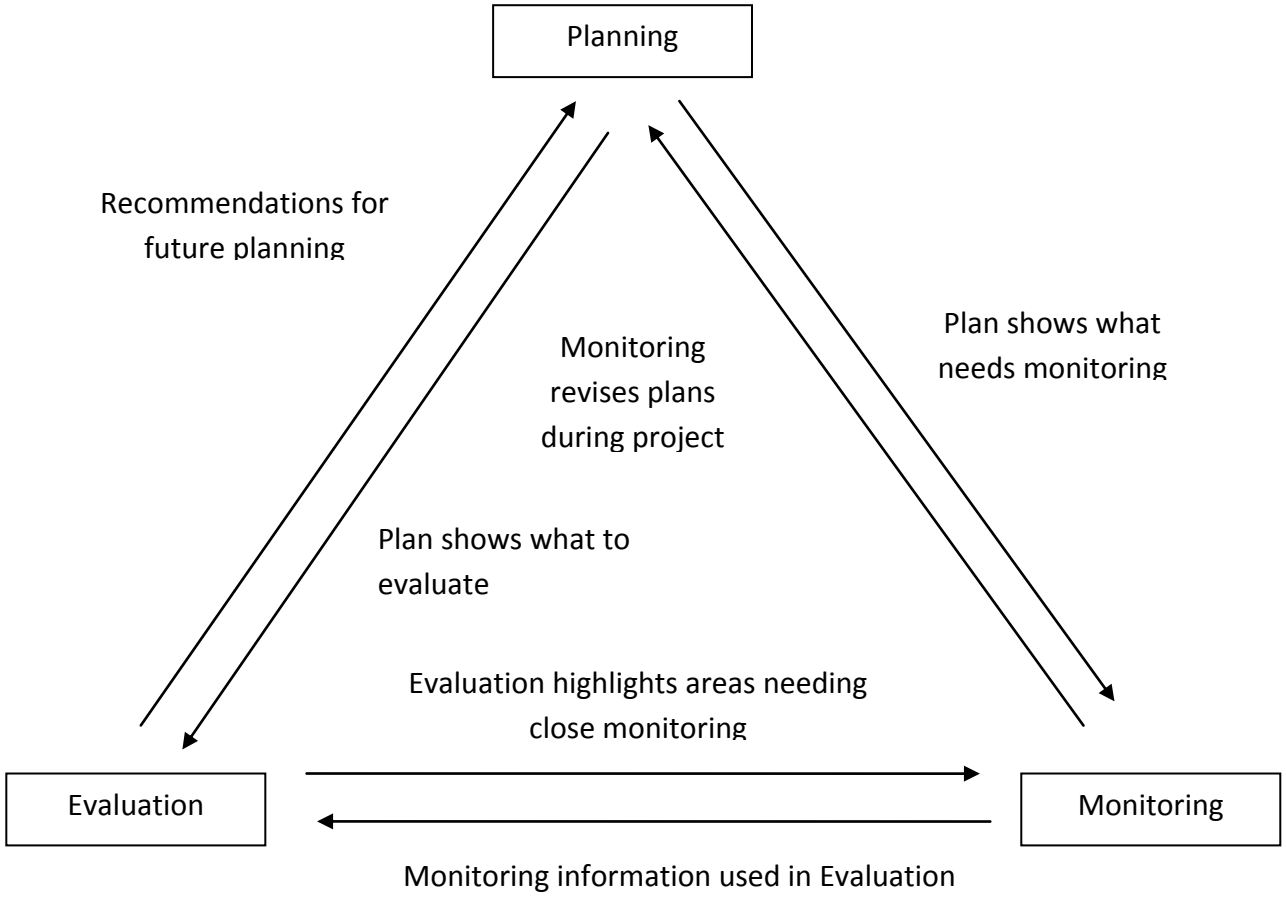
Differences between monitoring and evaluation

	Monitoring	**Evaluation**
Timing	Continuous throughout the project	Periodic, at significant point in project or activity's progress – end, mid-term, new phase, end of year
Scope	Day to day activities, outputs, indicators of progress towards objectives, change	Assess overall delivery of outputs and progress towards objectives and goal
Main participants	Project staff, project users	External evaluators / facilitators, project users, project staff, donors, other stakeholders
Process	Regular meetings, interviews – monthly, quarterly reviews etc	Extraordinary meetings, special data collection exercises, review of monitoring reports
Written and other outputs	Regular reports and updates to project users, management and donors	Written report with recommendations, presentations via workshops / meetings to stakeholders

Adapted from INTRAC (2003: 8)

The relations between planning, monitoring and evaluation

The three components cannot be dealt with in isolation. Where one element is missing, the project or activity will be weak.

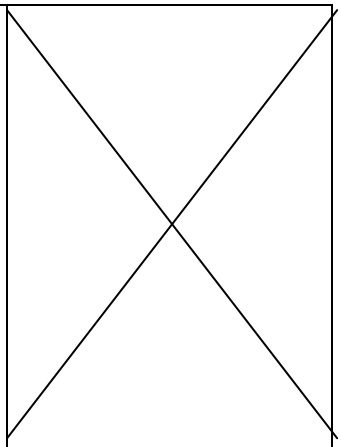


INTRAC (2003: 14)

Definition of monitoring, evaluation and audit

	Monitoring & regular review	Evaluation	Audit
Who?	Internal management responsibility – all levels	Usually incorporates external inputs (objectivity)	Incorporates external inputs
When?	Ongoing	Periodic – mid-term, completion, ex-post ongoing and upon	Ex-ante (systems reviews), completion
Why?	Check progress, take remedial action, update plans	Learn broad lessons applicable to other programmes/projects and as an input to policy review Provide accountability	Provide assurance and accountability to stakeholders Provide recommendations for improvement of current and future projects
Link to Logframe objective hierarchy	Inputs, activities, results	Results, purpose, overall objective (& link back to relevance)	Inputs, activities and results

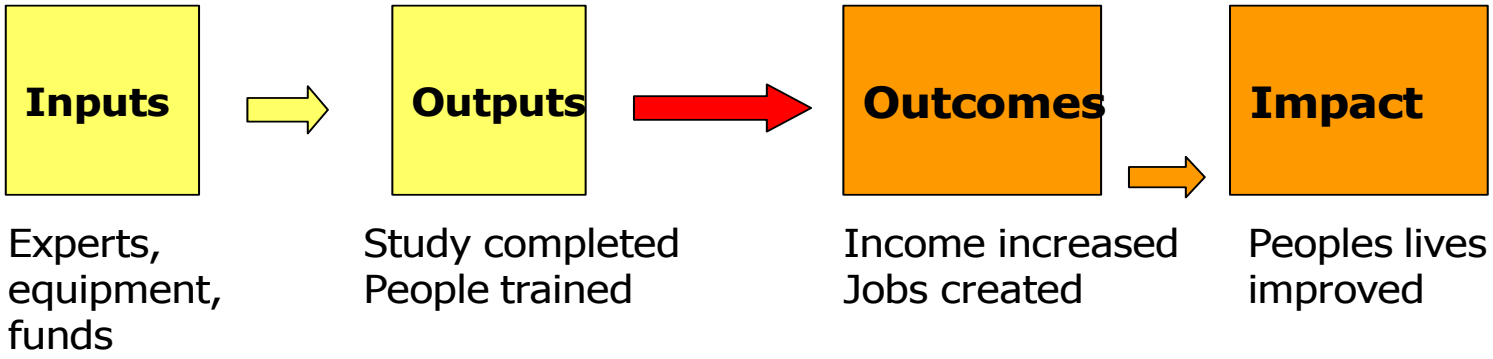
The Logical Framework

Overall Objective / Development Goal The higher-level objective or desired future situation towards which the project is expected to contribute (with other interventions).	**Indicators** Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of goal	**Sources of Verification** Specification of where, how and in what format to obtain the information about indicators. To be accessible and reliable	
Project Objective / Purpose The immediate effect of the project on the situation or target group; i.e. the change or benefit to be achieved by the project	**Indicators** Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of project objective	**Sources of Verification** Specification of where, how and in what format to obtain the information about indicators. To be accessible and reliable	**Assumptions** Main external factors (incl. Important events, conditions or decisions) outside the control of the project necessary for project objective(s) to achieve the overall objective.
Results / Outputs The results which the project should be able to guarantee, which should lead to the achievement of the project objective.	**Indicators** Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of results	**Sources of Verification** Specification of where, how and in what format to obtain the information about indicators. To be accessible and reliable	**Assumptions** Main external factors (incl. Important events, conditions or decisions) outside the control of the project necessary for the results to achieve the project objective(s).
Activities The activities and tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the expected results.	**Inputs** Good and services necessary to undertake the activities	**Sources** Summary of cost of inputs and project budget	**Assumptions** Main external factors (incl. Important events, conditions or decisions) outside the control of the project necessary for activities to achieve results.

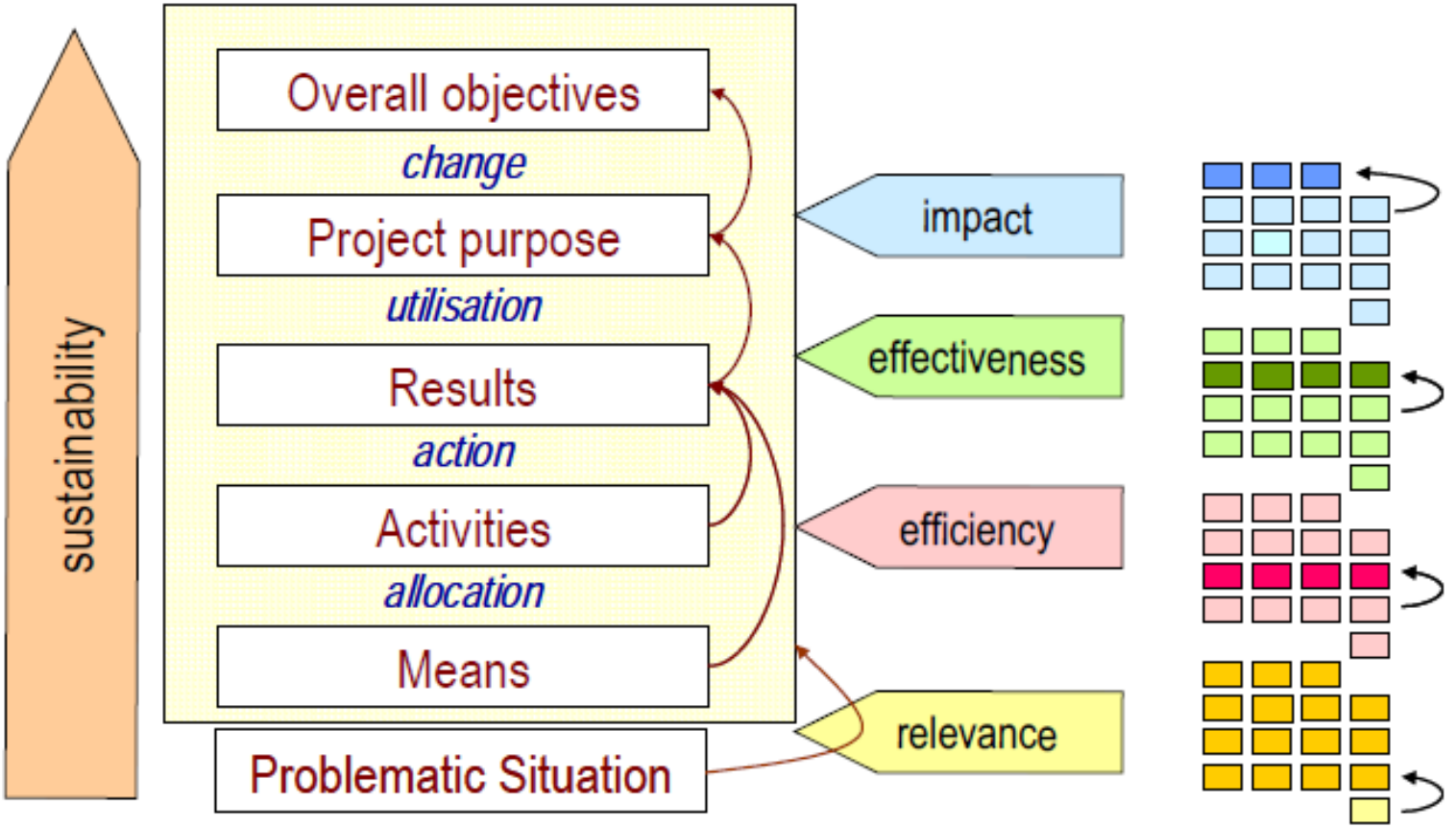
What is an Outcome?

- Outcomes are **developmental changes** between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impacts
- In this sense, is a medium term achievement leading to impact
- It is accomplished through partnership - inputs from others
- Partners are **agents or actors** with whom we have, or *intend* to have, a substantive relationship in pursuit of common outcomes (ex: stakeholders, beneficiaries, donors, etc)

The Result Chain:



Evaluation criteria & logframe levels



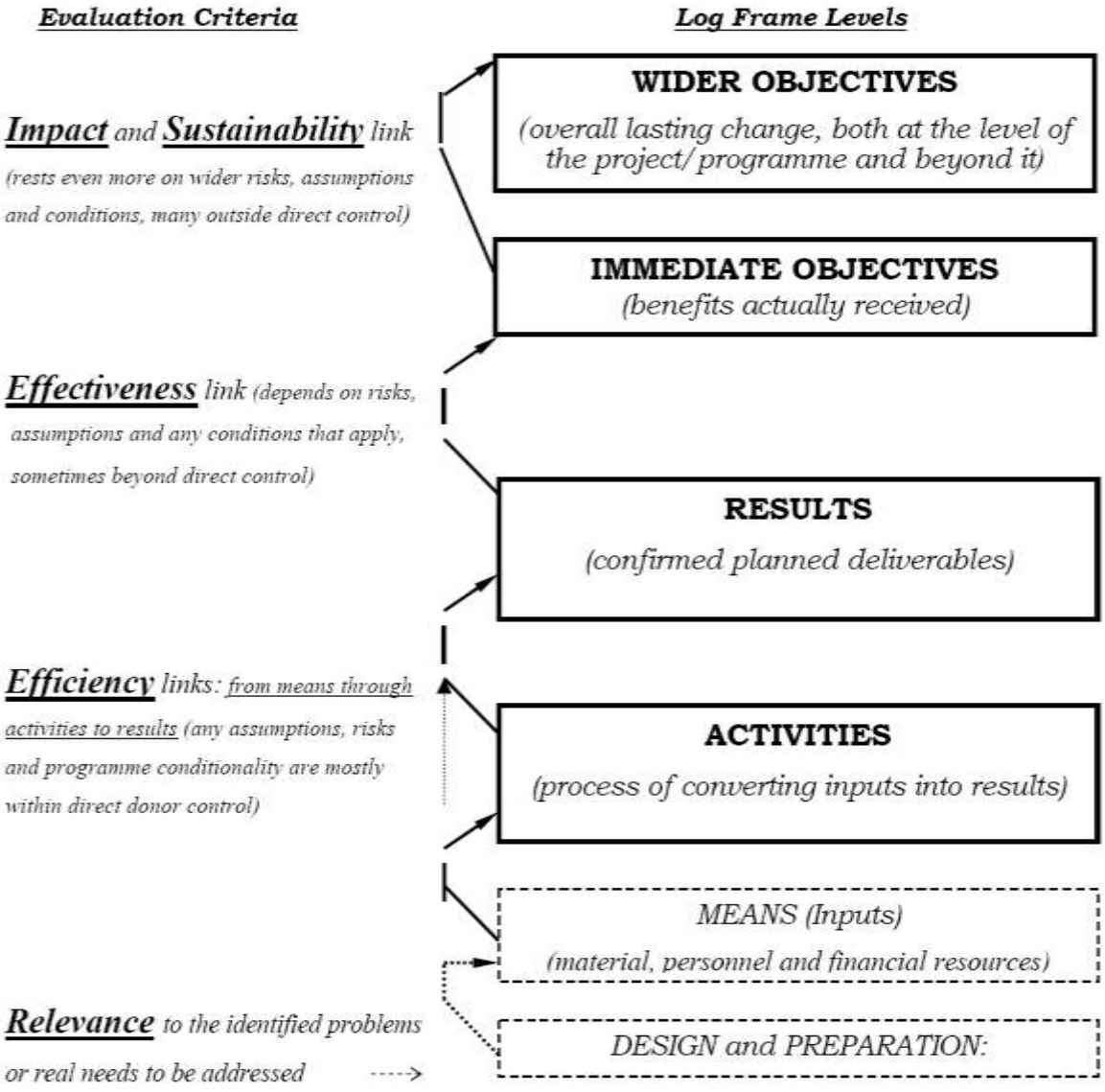
Application of the DAC evaluation criteria to the log-frame

3.1. METHODOLOGY

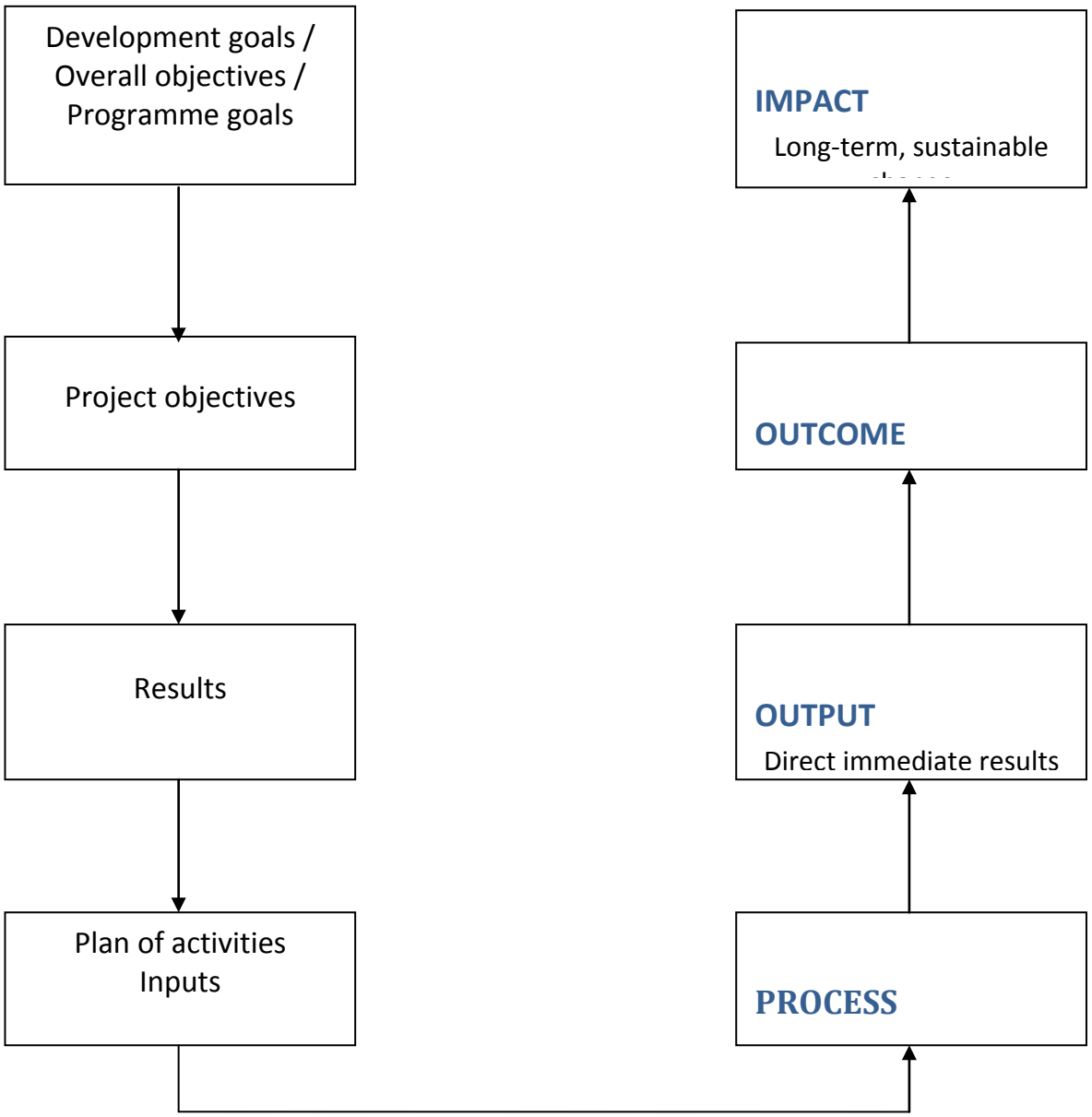
The basic concepts and evaluation methodology, applied to the interim evaluation, are closely based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria[6]. The methodology is also fully consistent with DG RELEX's/AIDCO's approach. It also reflects the log frame principles as set out in the Commission's Project Cycle Management Manual.

3.1.1. Five Evaluation Criteria

The Phare Interim Evaluation is based on five evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The diagram below sets out the main linkages between these **key evaluation criteria** and the key Log Frame elements, and should be studied alongside the subsequent text:



Levels for Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity-building Activities



Reaction evaluation: e.g. Immediate reaction of training, or capacity building activity

Efficiency: e.g. Numbers of people trained, organizational assessment carried out, fundraising campaign being carried out

Effectiveness: e.g. Changes in organizational behaviour / practices

Impact: e.g. Organization more effective / relevant, civil society strengthened, organizational vision achieved

Making Assumptions in the Log-frame

Assumptions describe conditions that must exist if the project is to succeed but which are outside the direct control of the project management.

What external factors (outside your control) could affect the success of your project or prevent work from progressing? These may be climatic, political, economic, etc. but should be real (possible) risks rather than a list of everything that could go wrong in theory.

Reflecting up from the bottom of your log frame, consider how, if each assumption holds, it will be possible to move to the next stage of the project.

The assumptions ensure that each planning level contain the necessary and sufficient conditions to achieve the next level. So, for example, on the bottom row of the log-frame, the logic dictates that:

- IF activities are carried out AND the assumptions concerning external factors hold true, THEN expected results will be achieved. It then follow that:
- IF expected results are realised AND the assumption concerning external factors hold true, THEN the project objective(s) will be achieved. Etc.

Some assumptions can be derived from elements in the objectives tree which were not incorporated into the project.

Identify assumptions at each level in the log-frame up to the project objective level (which relate diagonally in the framework to the achievement of the overall objective).

Assumptions should be identified and assessed according to their importance to the achievement of results and probability.

- Precedence is given to important factors with a high likelihood of occurring.
- If an assumption is of little or no importance to the outcome of the project, but is likely to occur, ignore it. Do not include it in the log-frame.
- Include assumptions which are important to the project's outcome and also *likely, but not certain* to occur. Monitor it, report changes to its status and, if possible, take measures to influence it positively during the project.
- If an assumption is very important, but not likely to occur, then it is a killer factor. i.e. the project's success is at great risk because of the factor. Where killer factors are identified the project must be adapted to ensure that they are avoided.

Examples of assumptions:

- Local self-governments participate in planning activities;
- Educators who receive professional training continue to work in local schools;

- Conflict from the neighbouring country does not spread into the project area, disrupting educational activities;
- World food prices remain stable; there is no sudden rise in price inflation.

Assumptions – summary points:

- can be derived from the objectives tree
- are often identified as risks, but are worded as necessary positive conditions
- are linked to the different levels in the log-frame
- are weighted according to importance and probability

Developing Indicators - 1

1. General

The details of the indicators determine how we can measure to what extent the objectives have been achieved at different times.

Measurements can be:

- Quantitative, e.g. kilometres of rehabilitated roads
- Qualitative, e.g. farmers' cooperative functioning effectively
- Behavioural, e.g. increased use of sanitary facilities

Qualitative indicators should be made measurable as far as possible.

Direct indicators may need to be supplemented by additional indirect (proxy) indicators.

Example of direct and indirect (proxy) indicators:

OBJECTIVE / PURPOSE	DIRECT INDICATOR	PROXY INDICATOR
Increased income of small farmers	Crop sales	• Purchase of typical consumer items • Tin roofs on houses

Several indicators are better than one. Single indicators seldom convey a comprehensive picture of change.

2. Defining how to very achievement of objectives

In the context of the LFA, indicators specify the performance standard to be reached in order to achieve the overall objective / goal, the project objectives / purpose and the outputs / results. Indicators should specify:

- Target group (for whom)
- Quantity (how much)
- Quality (how well)
- Time (by when)
- Location (where)
- Indicators provide a basis for monitoring and evaluation

3. Characteristics of an Indicator

A good indicator is:

- **Substantial**, i. e. it reflects an essential aspect of an objective in precise terms.

- **Independent**, at the different levels. Since development and immediate objectives will be different, and each indicator is expected to reflect evidence of achievement, the same indicator cannot normally be used for more than one objective.

- **Factual**. Each indicator should reflect fact rather than subjective impression. It should have the same meaning for project supporters and to informed sceptics.

- **Plausible**, i. e. the changes recorded can be directly attributed to the project.

- Based on **obtainable** data. Indicators should draw upon data that is readily available or that can be collected with reasonable extra effort as part of the administration of the project. The measures provided by indicators should ideally be accurate enough to make the indicator objectively verifiable. An indicator is "objectively verifiable" when different persons using the same measuring process independently of one another obtain the same measurements.

In the early planning stages, indicators are just guiding values with which to analyze the project concept. These guiding values must be reviewed again when the project becomes operational, and where necessary replaced by project-specific indicators.

4. Formulating the indicator

Objective: Increased agricultural production

1. **Identify indicator:** e.g. increased rice yield

2. **Specify target group:** male and female smallholders (cultivating 3 acres or less)

3. **Quantify:** 500 smallholders increase production by 50%

4. **Set quality:** maintaining same quality of harvest as 1989 crops

5. **Specify time frame:** between October 1990 and October 1991

6. **Set location:** Umbia district

Combine: : 500 male and female smallholders in Umbia district (cultivating 3 acres or less) increase their rice yield by 50% between month 1 and 13, maintaining the same quality of harvest as pre-project crops.

Developing Indicators - 2

Tool from Civicus Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit

✸ **DEVELOPING INDICATORS**

Step 1: Identify the problem situation you are trying to address. The following might be problems:

- Economic situation (unemployment, low incomes etc)
- Social situation (housing, health, education etc)
- Cultural or religious situation (not using traditional languages, low attendance at religious services etc)
- Political or organisational situation (ineffective local government, faction fighting etc)

There will be other situations as well.

(See the section on problem analysis in the toolkit on overview of planning, in the section on doing the ground work.)

Step 2: Develop a vision for how you would like the problem areas to be/look. (See the toolkit on strategic planning, the section on vision.) This will give you impact indicators.

What will tell you that the vision has been achieved? What signs will you see that you can measure that will "prove" that the vision has been achieved? For example, if your vision was that the people in your community would be healthy, then you can use health indicators to measure how well you are doing. Has the infant mortality rate gone down? Do fewer women die during child-birth? Has the HIV/AIDS infection rate been reduced? If you can answer "yes" to these questions then progress is being made.

Step 3: Develop a process vision for how you want things to be achieved. This will give you process indicators.

If, for example, you want success to be achieved through community efforts and participation, then your process vision might include things like community health workers from the community trained and offering a competent service used by all; community organises clean-up events on a regular basis, and so on.

Step 4: Develop indicators for effectiveness.

For example, if you believe that you can increase the secondary school pass rate by upgrading teachers, then you need indicators that show you have been effective in upgrading the teachers e.g. evidence from a survey in the schools, compared with a baseline survey.

Step 5: Develop indicators for your efficiency targets.

Here you can set indicators such as: planned workshops are run within the stated timeframe, costs for workshops are kept to a maximum of US$ 2.50 per participant, no more than 160 hours in total of staff time to be spent on organising a conference; no complaints about conference organisation etc.

Examples of Indicators

Outcomes	*Indicators*
New mothers increase their knowledge of child development.	75% of new mothers in the program satisfactorily complete a short survey about child development at the end of the course
Target audiences increase knowledge about the signs of child abuse and neglect	50% of community focus group members can identify the signs of child abuse and neglect six months after education campaign ends
Residents feel neighborhood is a safer place for children	60% of neighborhood residents report in one year that they believe the neighborhood is safer for children than it was one year before.
Diversified program resources	In one year, each of four funding sources (public, private corporation, individual donors, foundations) comprise at least 15% and not more than 55% of program income
Increased cultural competency of legal aid attorneys	80% of legal aid attorneys self-report learning about cultural issues at end of workshop Within 6 months, 60% of clients of trained attorneys indicate attorney was knowledgeable about cultural issues
Increased legislators' awareness of policy options	In six months, 45% of surveyed legislators indicate awareness of different policy options
Students (K-6) demonstrate knowledge about opera	By the end of class: -65% of children can identify the story of the opera being performed. -65% can describe 3 of the characters in the opera. -50% can identify the type of voice (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) of the character singing a part
Youth have increased knowledge about the consequences of long-term ATOD use/abuse.	At end of course -90% of participants report that they gained knowledge about the risks/harms associated with ATOD use -80% report that it is important not to use alcohol or other drugs.

Source: Innovation Network: Evaluation Plan Workbook, 2005

Direct versus Indirect Indicators

Ensure that your indicators relate directly to the outcome you are evaluating, and are evidence of the same type of change. Below are some examples of direct versus indirect indicators for the sample outcomes.

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
Participating new mothers have their children immunized (behavior)	Indirect: #/% of participating new mothers who are aware of importance of immunization (awareness) Direct: #/% of children of participating mothers who are up-to-date in immunizations within 1 year (behavior)
Participating children understand principles of good sportsmanship (knowledge)	Indirect: #/% of children who participate on teams after finishing program (unrelated behavior) Direct: #/% of participating youth who are able to identify five good sportsmanship behaviors by the end of the season (knowledge); #/% of fights and arguments among student athletes decreases each year of program (behavior, but shows knowledge in action)
Targeted teens increase knowledge of certain environmental health hazards (knowledge)	Indirect: #/% of students who receive brochure on topic during first 6 months of program (output) Direct: #/% of targeted students who can identify 3 health hazards at end of first year of program (knowledge)

Source: Innovation Network: Evaluation Plan Workbook, 2005

Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods are how you will measure the achievement of outputs and objectives; they are the **means of verification** of the indicators in the log-frame.

The goal in data collection is to minimise the number of collection instruments while maximising the amount of information you collect from each one.

The key 3 considerations are: **what information will you need, and how and from where can it be gathered?**

Important questions to consider when identifying data collection methods include:

- Which methods are best suited to obtain the information you require? –
    - Quantitative and qualitative indicators will require different approaches
    - Cultural appropriateness and other contextual issues
    - Degree of participation required
- Which methods can you afford to implement effectively – time, money and human resources?
- Which methods will be least disruptive to your project and the main stakeholders (although note that participatory monitoring has a potential capacity-building function)?
- Who will carry out the data collection?
    - Project staff may be biased and people may also tell them what they want to hear;
    - Project participants may also have interests which affect the data. Do they have the capacities / opportunity to collect the required data?
    - Other stakeholders: Do they have time and sufficient interest?
- Timing of data collection: Data collection must be repeated at regular intervals in order to reveal changes (positive or negative) which should be acted upon. But too frequent data collection will be costly and runs the risk of fatiguing stakeholders so that motivation and participation falls off.

Don't exclude anecdotal evidence (e.g. Views expressed by project beneficiaries and participants etc) if this is the most appropriate source of information, but remember that donors can be wary of this evidence and it may later be necessary to demonstrate your claims!

The most common data collection methods fall within the following broad categories:

1. Reviewing documents

Analysis of printed material including:

- Project records and reports;
- Reports and documents from project participants and their organisations. Individuals might keep personal diaries, professional logs and budgetary records, construct narratives.

Organisations may report on the project, but might also produce a range of planning, advocacy, policy and other documents, as well as budgets;

- Surveys, official statistics, health records etc;
- Other forms of written narratives.

2. Observation

Observing situations, behaviours and activities in a formalized and systematic way, either as a regular "check" on the project progress, or as a means of assessing project events, such as training or a conference. This is a good method to use in settings where experiencing actual events or settings (rather than hearing about them) is an important for monitoring.

3. Talking to people

Collect verbal responses from participants and other stakeholders through interviews (in-person or phone), focus groups, even workshops or informal chat. This method is helpful when it is important to hear complex or highly individual thoughts of a certain group of individuals. Interviews may be semi-structured (allowing greater freedom to explore issues in depth and for participants to elaborate on issues of importance to them), or structured providing more tangible, easily managed sets of information which may have more relevance to a statistical analysis.

4. Collect written responses from people

Collect written responses through surveys (in-person, e-mail, online, mail, phone), tests, or journals/logs. Except in the case of journals, this method is often used when you need a lot of information from a large number of people or when it is important that identical information be available from all respondents.

5. Other methods

- Review pictorial/multi-media data in photographs, audiotapes, compact discs, visual artwork etc.
- Peer reviews in which professionals in a particular field or organisation appraise each other's work, as part of a capacity-building initiative;
- Case studies – either undertaken by participants or project staff.
- Participatory assessments – including workshops, action learning sets, post-event evaluations.

Choosing Data Collection Methods

Data collection method	Requirements for use and analysis				Characteristics of data	Purpose of analysis
	Cost	Time	Expertise	Accuracy		
Focus group discussions	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	Difficult to organise groups but direct flow of information	Monitor development process, planning, **not** control or accountability
Individual interviews	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	Both quantitative and qualitative, data depends on quality of interviewers	Accountability up, planning, control, **not** accountability down
Formal social surveys	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	Quantitative data	Accountability up, planning, control
Participatory techniques	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Views of participants but time consuming. Part of development process	Accountability down, impact, **not** control
Observation	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	Depends on person making observation	Impact, accountability up, **not** control, accountability down
Participant observation	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Good for understanding target groups and impact	Information, planning, impact, **not** control, accountability up/down
Secondary information	✓	✓	✓	n/a	Complementary, saves collecting duplicate data, good for comparison	Planning **not** accountability, impact
Technical/ geographical surveys	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	Good for physical data, assumes relevance	Information, planning, accountability up, impact, **not** accountability down, control
Financial audit	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	Good for financial assessment	Accountability, control, planning, **not** impact

Source: INTRAC (2003) Sharpening the Development Process: A Practical Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation. Adapted from Marsden et al 1994

Managing Data and Reporting

Most monitoring systems will collect large amounts of data, collected in a variety of ways from a number of sources. It is important to design a standard format for recording each type of data so that data sets collected over time may be compared easily and analysed – both as part of the ongoing monitoring and for future evaluations.

Qualitative data presents a particular challenge: how to capture the essential points in a succinct format that may be used for analysis. Much qualitative data will arise from discursive methods: meetings, workshops, discussions with key informants. Summarising the essential points is a particular skill, acquired through practice.

Typical records for a monitoring system include:

- Report forms: used to record regularly occurring information, especially quantitative data. They may be designed, however, to record key qualitative indicators.
    - Prices
    - Numbers of those attending meetings
    - Names
- Meeting reports: minutes of staff meetings, management meetings, in-project planning, project reviews
- Training reports
- Visit reports, using observation and notes from conversations
- Summaries or transcriptions of interviews, workshops, focus groups, special monitoring exercises
- Diaries: either by staff members, or from project participants
- Media cuttings, photographs and other material, such as outputs by participants: NGO documents, work by school children, plans by municipalities etc.

All monitoring material should be stored in a logical manner (filed or put on electronic data base), dated, labelled and cross-referenced.

Project staff should assess all data collected at regular monitoring meetings. The frequency of these meetings will be determined by the length of the project, the frequency of data collection and the intensity and frequency of project / action activities. These may be once a month or might be once every three months.

Monitoring meetings will be used to create a summary of results and conclusions which are relevant to the project's management. Very often these will be presented as a narrative report, but a clearer tool may be a summary table (see example), although there is no one best way to present findings.

The monitoring summary will include:

- What progress has been made since the last report
- What are areas of concern: are gaps in implementation, is there lack of progress in certain areas?
- Are external factors affecting progress? What are these?
- Are the indicators useful?
- Are the right methods being used to obtain data?

It will also give:

- Recommendations for changes in implementation and practice
- Recommendations to changes in the monitoring system

Regular monitoring meetings form the most basic part of **a pyramid of analysis and reporting** that takes place in all organisations. These reports will be sent to the monitoring unit (in a large organisation) or the organisation's management team. The management team will use these reports to further analyse and summarise before reporting to, say a country office or the project's donor. And so on.

Important:

1. Each level of reporting should involve both further analysis on the basis of new information, and further summarising.
2. Regular monitoring activities should have a regular purpose in the organisation or project, of use in the day-to-day managing of activities. This means that decisions should be taken on the basis of monitoring and that those decisions should be implemented.

Basic Monitoring Report Sheet

This is a summary record for any monitoring activity. It should not take more than one page

Unique Reference:	Project:	Date:
Tool:		
Source:		
Indicator	**Result**	
Indicator 1 – only include indicators for which you have information in this record	The result (positive or negative) relating to the indicator which was shown through this tool	
Indicator 2	...	
Indicator 3	...	
...	...	
...	...	
...	...	
Other observations: Any other observations which you think demonstrate progress in meeting objectives but which are not included in the list of indicators		

Source: INTRAC (2003) Sharpening the Development Process: A Practical Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation

Project Monitoring Report

Unique Reference:		Project:	Date:
Source: Unique references for data sources for report			
Overall objective	**Level**	**Indicators**	**Result**
Objective 1	Effort	Effort indicator 1 Effort indicator 2	Summary of the results (positive or negative) given in basic monitoring records relating to the indicator
	Effect	Effect indicator 1 Effect indicator 2	...
	Change	Change indicator 1 Change indicator 2	...
Objective 2	Effort	Effort indicator 1 Effort indicator 2	...
	Effect	Effect indicator 1 Effect indicator 2	...
	Change	Change indicator 1 Change indicator 2	...
Objective ...	Effort	Effort indicator 1 Effort indicator 2	...
	Effect	Effect indicator 1 Effect indicator 2	...
	Change	Change indicator 1 Change indicator 2	...
Other observations	Any other observations which you think demonstrate progress in meeting objectives but which are not included in the list of indicators		

Source: INTRAC (2003) Sharpening the Development Process: A Practical Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Example of simple monitoring plan – adapted from project application to EC DG Development

Level of plan	Indicators	Means / source	Who	When
Overall objective / Goal				
To reduce poverty in 4 pilot municipalities in the most disadvantaged area of BiH	1. Increased GDP / capita 2. Increased level of employment 3. Increased level of family income 4. Increased sense of well-being amongst population	1. Economic statistical reports (RS office of statistics, RDAs, municipalities) 2. Employment offices, tax register 3. Living standards surveys 4. Social mapping and living standards surveys	Project staff Project staff RDA, municipalities, project partner NGO Municipalities, partner NGOs	At project end and one year after project end
Objectives				
To establish favourable conditions for stimulating employment, new businesses and a local job market in 4 municipalities of Bosnia and Herz.a	1. Increased number of citizens actively seeking employment 2. Increased number of new businesses	1.1 Register of clients at job shop 1.2 Job shop database showing job applications 1.3 Reports from business 2.1 Municipal business register	1.1 Project partner NGO (name?) 1.2 Project partner NGO (name?) 1.3 Project staff (name?) Etc, etc	1.1 Every month 1.2 Every month 1.2 Every month

	3. More jobs publicly advertised 4. Local development planning taking place	Etc.		
Output / Result				
10 communities have the capacities to undertake planning to develop the local economy within 24 months	1. - 10 communities boards carrying out development planning	1.1 Community board planning documents 1.2 Observation of community board planning meetings 1.3 Minutes of coordination meetings with municipalities	1.1 Community board secretary 1.2 Project staff 1.3 Municipal officers or board secretary	1.1 Every two months after month 8 1.2 Monthly 1.3 Monthly
	2. – 10 communities trained in …by month 8	2.1 Trainers reports 2.2 Interviews with board members	2.1 Trainers 2.2 Project staff	2.1 After each training 2.2 Every two months till month 10
Etc				

2. Excerpt from monitoring plan – adapted from WWF

Monitoring plan: Tropical Forests Site

Date: December 2005

What? (Indicator)	How? (Methods)	When?	Who Responsible?	Who Analyse?	Where?	Related Indicators	Monitoring Cost	Baseline Data	Desired Result	Comments
Goal: By 2020, at least 80%* of the primary forest coverage (hectares) in the Rio Arroyo Watershed maintains its productive and ecological functionality. * This goal could be divided in two, if there is a more specific zoning in the future. Possibly, it could be separated by % intact and % for forest product harvesting.										
Forest cover: # of hectares of primary forest	Current satellite images	Every 3 years	WWF GIS Team (Armando)	Project team (Maria as lead)	Primary forest in the Rio Arroyo watershed	National government forest plan (2005 – 2015), Objective 4	Zero (available through local university)	100,000 hectares	80,000 hectares or more	
	Field validation through sampling	Every 3 years	Forestry specialist (Frank?)	Project team (Maria as lead)	Sampling sites identified through GIS		EUR 1,000 every 3 years			
Presence (yes/no) of key sensitive flora and fauna: - Huangana - Paujil - Maquisapa - Caoba - Lunpuna	Inventory and evaluation of wild flora and fauna	Every 3 years	Fauna: José and José Luis Flora: Frank	Project team (Maria as lead)	Primary forest in the Rio Arroyo Watershed	None known – to be determined	Zero (available through local university biology & forest departments)	To be collected, January 2006	Presence of all key species	
Abundance of key species (from above)	Transects	Every 3 years	Fauna: José and José Luis Flora: Frank	Project team (Maria as lead)	Primary forest in the Rio Arroyo Watershed	None known – to be determined	Zero (available through local university biology & forest	To be collected, January 2006	Representative viable populations of each key species (varies by species)	Need to determine with local university what are representative

You may not always have all the information you need – you should note in your monitoring plan where you still need to find information & then come back at a later date & update your plan

What? (Indicator)	How? (Methods)	When?	Who Responsible?	Who Analyse?	Where?	Related Indicators	Monitoring Cost	Baseline Data	Desired Result	Comments
							departments)			viable populations of key species
Objective CB1: By 2006, all recognized communities have internal statutes and regulations applied in an effective manner. * 7 titled plus 8 annexes make up the total of communities in the Rio Arroyo Watershed.										
# of communities with internal statutes and regulations	Review statutes & regulations	Every 6 months	Specialists (Robert, Maria, José)	Project team (Maria as lead)	In communities in the Rio Arroyo Watershed	None	EUR 0 – 50 (project staff time)	0	7 titled communities + 8 annexes	We want to encourage them to use the statuses & regulations
# of community authorities that apply the statutes and regulations	Community surveys to know if villagers know about the statutes and regulations Review the community board acts and decisions	Every 6 months	Specialists (Robert, Maria, José)	Project team (Maria as lead)	In communities in the Rio Arroyo Watershed	None	EUR 50 – 100 (project staff time to verify)	0	7 titled communities + 8 annexes	We want to encourage them to use the statuses & regulations Standard questionnaires & representative samples
Objective CB2: By 2006, at least 15 indigenous communities have basic knowledge about their rights over territories and natural resources										
# of elected authorities and promoters in communities trained	List of participants in the courses	At the end of the course	Technical team (Robert)	Project team (Maria as lead)	In Rio Arroyo communities	None	EUR 50 – 100 (project staff time to verify)	0	At least 2 per community or annex	Every 6 months, it will be necessary to systematically organize the information

What? (Indicator)	How? (Methods)	When?	Who Responsible?	Who Analyse?	Where?	Related Indicators	Monitoring Cost	Baseline Data	Desired Result	Comments
# of elected authorities and promoters trained who display basic knowledge about their communities' rights over territories and natural resources	Individual evaluation of knowledge*	Before and after the course	Technical team (Robert)	Project team (Maria as lead)	In Rio Arroyo communities	None	EUR 50 – 100 (project staff time to verify)	0	At least 75% of participants and at least 1 elected authority per community or annex	* How do they learn about the concepts in their daily life context?
Objective CB3: By 2006, 15 indigenous communities have a functioning control and vigilance system.										
# of communities with control and vigilance systems established	Review acts to find establishment of vigilance committees	Every 3 months	José	Project team (Maria as lead)	In Rio Arroyo Watershed communities	None	EUR 50 – 100 (project staff time to verify)	0	15 indigenous communities	
	Verification with community authorities and local teacher the number of field patrols	Every 3 months	José	Project team (Maria as lead)	In Rio Arroyo Watershed communities		EUR 50 – 100 (project staff time to verify)			
	Accompany committees on their patrols	Every 3 months	José	Project team (Maria as lead)	In Rio Arroyo Watershed communities		EUR 300 (project staff time & field trip costs to			

Depending on the circumstances, this may or may not be appropriate

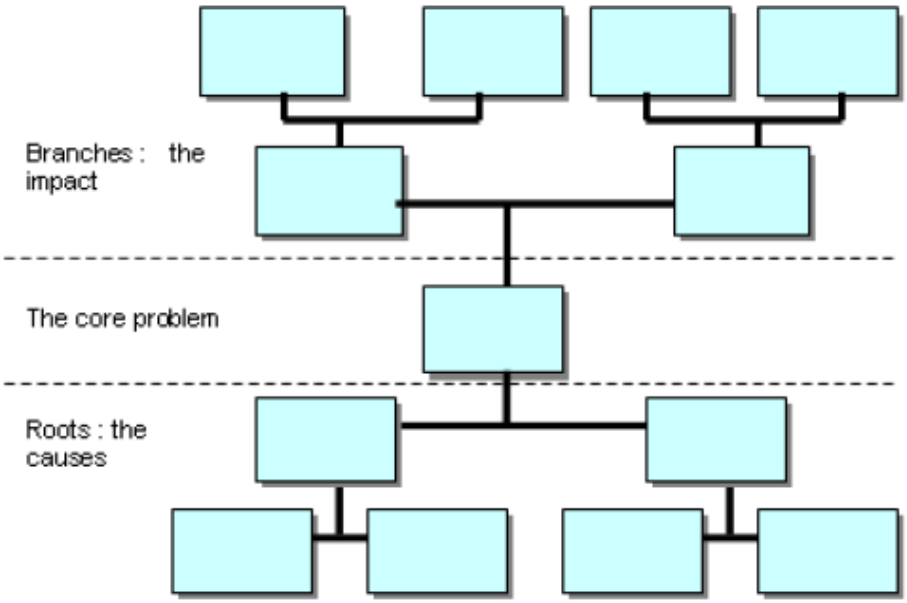
This team was probably overly ambitious in their estimates of how often they would collect monitoring data. Remember, you want to keep your monitoring as simple as possible and collect the least amount of information needed to provide you with good management guidance.

Source: WWF – Resources for Implementing the WWF Standards, 2005

Problem Tree

A standard tool for analysing the causes of a problem and its effects and impacts (and also the potential impacts of a proposed development initiative) is a problem tree. The diagram is based upon the premise that cause-and-effect relationships are linked and constitute a logical, linear system, free from the effects of feedback.

The importance of problems varies. It is thus theoretically possible to identify a core (or central) problem and derive from it a range of causes and effects. When a core problem is identified, the diagram may be developed to show the roots (the causes) and also the branches (the consequences and impacts) all of are represented as being inextricably linked in relationships of cause and effect to the core problem or trunk:



A problem tree helps us to:

- understand the problems that people face in a particular context or community;
- understand the relationship between the problems;
- understand how cause and effect operate in relation to the problems.

A problem tree is a useful tool for:

- the elaboration and wording of projects
- part of a planning methodology contributing to the development a logical framework
- participative decision making which includes the main stakeholders

Problem tree method

Step 1. State the problem you want to address. This may be self-evident, but it is best to ask each member of a group to write down what they consider to be the key problem. Make each problem statement as specific as possible. e.g., '50% of school leavers do not find jobs,' is better than 'there is high unemployment'. The more specific your problem statement, the easier it is to look at cause and effect, and at the possible solutions.

Step 2. Select one problem as a starting point. It is easier if this is considered by the group to be a central issue, but do not worry if it is not the most important. The problem provides a starting point upon which to focus. The other problem statement cards may be placed on the wall or chart for reference or reminders.

Step 3. In the group, probe the causes of the selected problem by asking the question 'why'. Write each answer on a new card. Do this until you can go no further with explanations.

For each 'why', there are a number of answers. By repeating the question for each answer, you will arrive at a number of causes of the problem. Problems can be much larger that the example given below:

There is a high rate of children's diseases (can this be more specific?)

But why?

Parents are not taking their children to health centres for vaccinations

But why?

Parents do not trust health workers

But why?

Health workers are unresponsive to patients

But why?

Step 4. Represent the relationships of cause and effect, by building the root network of your problem tree, placing each answer card on a large chart or wall to show the relationships, as above. As you work, check the logic of the cause and effect. Add any issues that appear important or make important connections in the tree of causality. Take out repetitive cards.

The problem tree can now be extended to include the effects of the central problem, by drawing the branches of the tree. Again, for every problem there may be a number of effects, so giving a much more complicated diagram than the example given below.

The Fishbone Diagram

The 'Fishbone' Diagram

The fishbone diagram (also called the Cause and Effect Analysis) is a technique for identifying the possible causes affecting an issue or problem. It is a visually effective way of recording the possible causes and ranking these in order of importance.

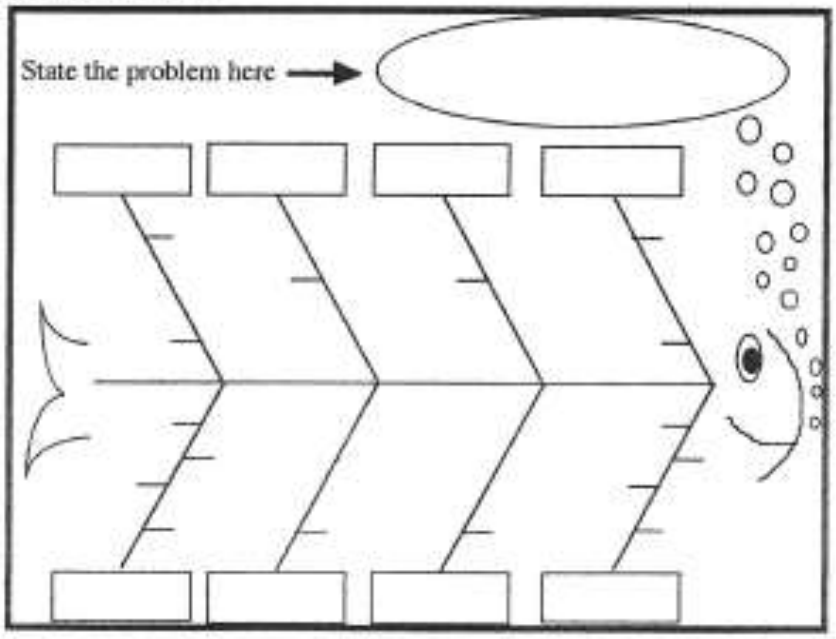
Problems and their causes can sometimes appear vast, unmanageable and insoluble. One way of beginning to break down such problems is to break them down into manageable 'chunks'. Fishbone diagrams can be used to assist individuals and groups to generate and record ideas; reveal undetected relationships; investigate the origins of a problem or call attention to important relationships.

The fishbone diagram can be used for

- Defining a problem
- Identifying possible information requirements
- Identifying possible causes
- Developing objectives to achieve solutions
- Narrowing down or prioritising causes

The key steps are:

1. Name the problem or issue and write it in the large bubble
2. Identify the major causes and write each in one of the square boxes
3. Consider the contributory causes for each point in the square boxes and write each at the end of a line.
4. Incubate the ideas through discussion
5. Analyse and evaluate.



Source: INTRAC

The Margolis Wheel

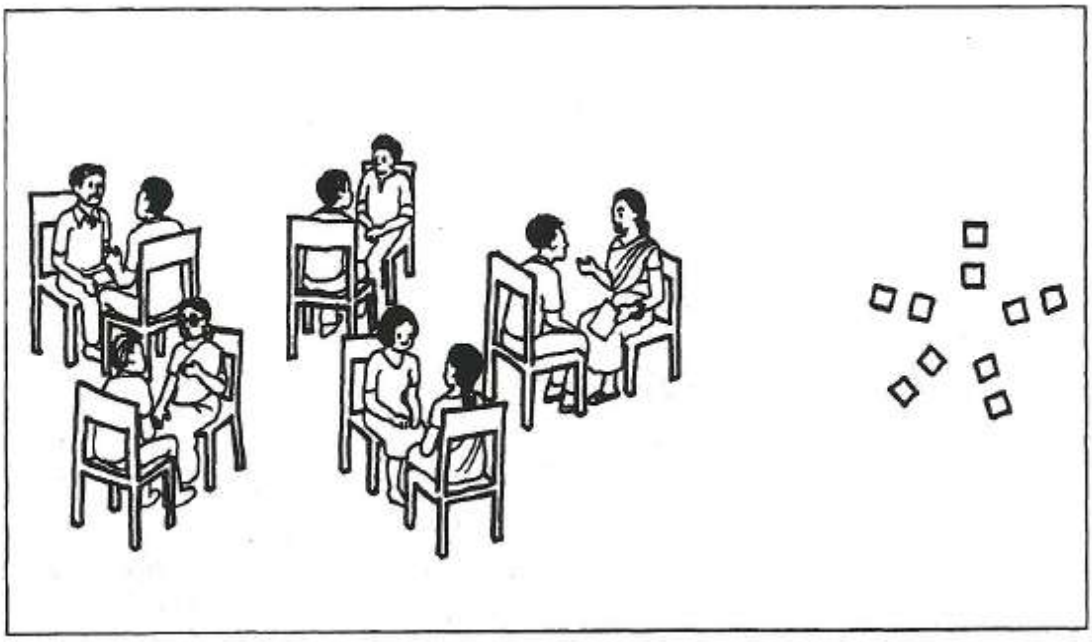
The Margolis wheel is a useful group exercise for facilitating reflection and generating analysis or for providing a means for members of a group to provide advice on real problems and opportunities.

It might be used as a workshop method for exploring issues and problems within a monitoring system, as means of initiating group analysis of monitoring data (particularly in monitoring systems which include the participation of project stakeholders), or as part of a monitoring review or even as a tool for collecting qualitative monitoring data from a set of project participants in the field.

Margolis wheel method

Pairs of chairs are arranged opposite each other in two concentric circles. The method works best with between three and six pairs of chairs. More than this and the process can become unwieldy and too time consuming.

Members of the group occupy all the seats, so that everyone is sitting opposite somebody else. They are asked to reflect upon the problem, activity or issue to be discussed.



Those in the inner circle act as questioners or consultants whose aim is to stimulate discussion and the analysis by those in the outer circle, and / or to offer possible solutions. Those in the inner circle may be given the task of asking specific questions, one question at a time per round.

A round lasts a limited time of only a few minutes, typically around three minutes. Encourage participants to make notes and to record any important information, thoughts and conclusions.

After the three minutes are up, the participants swap seats, usually my one circle remaining and the other rotating one place. A further round is carried out to investigate a different problem or to pose a different question.

In this use of the wheel (and note that it can be used as a confidential and private means of stimulating reflection), analysis and reflection is usually presented in plenary where it is subject to further sorting and analysis.

Rich Pictures

Drawing a Rich Picture is an organisational development (OD) tool taken from Soft Systems Methodology. It is used to make a pictorial representation of complex issues, such as systems or organisations, including the elements they are composed of and the relationships between the elements. Pictures are often a better medium than linear prose for expressing complex relationships because they encourage a more dynamic and holistic representation of a situation. That is, they can provide a large or 'rich' amount of information in an easily digestible form.

Concerning monitoring, a rich picture can assist identify what aspects of a situation need to be monitored, which change indicators to follow and / or which key stakeholders should be included in the monitoring and evaluation work. It is also a useful tool for examining the monitoring system itself, its relationships and how it functions.

Although a rich picture focuses on relationships between people, organisations and other parts of a system, it does not tell you what has changed. It is good for exploring a current state and should be used as a means of opening up discussion to arrive at a common understanding of a situation and to diagnose problems.

Rich picture method

1. Using a large piece of paper (e.g. flipchart size) and with the help of pictures, symbols and words, draw a picture of the situation you with to explore. This is probably best done in small groups of 3 – 8 people, but it carried by individuals to generate more perspectives.
2. Use all the space available – spread out the elements but leave room for developing the picture (a Rich Picture is a dynamic tool and can be revised to incorporate new insights).
3. Include key people, teams and structures within the organisation and the key linkages and relationships between them.
4. Include other important stakeholders outside the organisation.
5. Represent the issues, problems and concerns of the people in the diagram using speech bubbles and thought bubbles (just like comic books).
6. Use metaphors – for example, if you think someone is acting like a bulldozer, draw them on one!
7. Represent types of relationships using arrows, lines or any other way you can think of.
8. Include yourself somewhere in the picture.
9. Add short notes if you think they are needed.
10. Represent the climate or quality of the relationships using symbols (such as dark clouds, sunshine, lightning bolts) or any other way you like.
11. Include influencing factors in the wider environment.
12. Make it colourful and let your creativity flow.

Adapted from INTRAC & IFAD, A Guide for Project M & E.

Flow Diagrams

Drawing a flow diagram is a method for analysing relationships of cause and effect, linking problems with their perceived causes and helping to arrive at possible solutions to such problems. It can also be used to identify effects or impacts of an initiative or a particular change. From a monitoring perspective it can help broaden insights about impacts, both positive and negative. It can also be used to identify general effects that form the basis for indicators that are tracked more systematically by other methods. It is also a means of exploring relationships, the direction of flows of information and the causes of problems within a monitoring system.

Flow diagram method

A . For systems diagrams.

1. Ask the group to reflect on the system (e.g. the monitoring system, a project process) and then to identify and represent all its components symbolically (signs, words, photographs etc) on the work space (large flip chart, wall or floor). It is best at this stage to work on pieces of card or paper so that the component may be moved around as analysis takes place.

2. The group now shows the linkages and flows between the different components (such as personal testimony from one group of project participants to project field staff in a monitoring system, or manure from livestock to fields in a farming system). Include linkages within the wider institutional framework – donors, government departments, communities, other development projects etc. Note that relationships may be two way and there may be feedback effects.

3. Discuss how the system functions – is it effective, which relationships are more important, are any flows inadequate or even missing, has the system changed over time, etc?

B. For Effect / Impact diagrams

1. Ask the group to select an activity or event, the effect / impact of which it wishes to examine. This may be the impact of policy changes, or a concrete input such as a training scheme or an event such as the loss of employment by a household head.

2. The impact or effect is represented on paper, and then the consequences of the activity or event are identified. These might be both positive or negative. The group then attempts to

link the consequences, using arrows to indicate the direction of flow. Try to probe also for indirect consequences or, if someone mentions something that is an indirect consequence, then ask them to explain what caused this more directly.

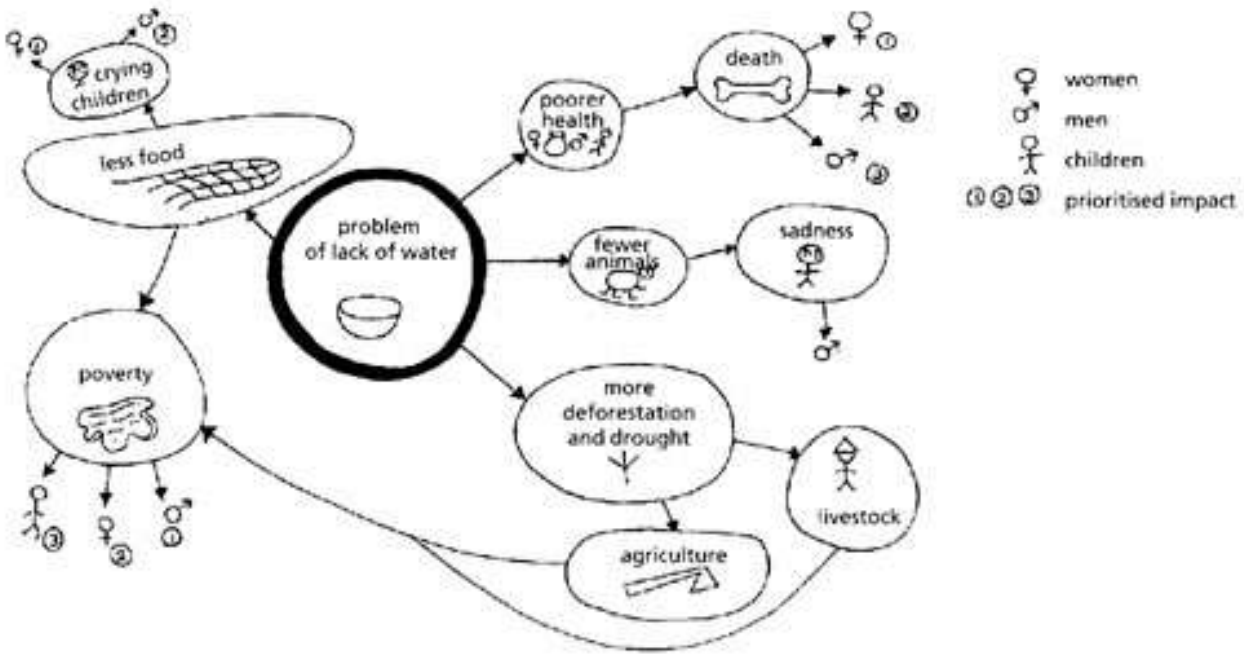
3. If quantitative information is required, then questions can be asked about the amounts related to each impact that has been identified.

4. Encourage the group to think of levels of cause and effect and to represent primary, secondary and tertiary effects grouped together as sub-systems.

5. Participants should be asked to consider if impact has been the same for different groups and why not. This should also be symbolised on the diagram.

6. The completed flow diagrams are then used for further analysis via group discussion.

Impact flow diagram of the gender-differentiated consequences of decreased access to water in Burkina-Faso (Guijt, I, 1996 cited in IFAD).



Adapted from Petty J.N. et al , 1999, Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainers Guide & IFAD, A Guide for Project M & E.

Venn Diagrams

Venn diagrams are used to illustrate the extent to which individuals, organisations, projects or services interact with other and the relative importance (i.e. the power dynamics) of each to the issue being assessed.

They are used to understand the current formal and informal institutions in the area under study. In particular they are used to identify the locally perceived role that outside agencies play in the community and also to highlight gaps between institutions and opportunities for better cooperation and communication.

Concerning monitoring, Venn diagrams can be used to monitor the quality of relationships between stakeholders and how these relationships are changing and to identify problems areas where corrective action is needed. In this way, Venn diagrams can also a useful aid to evaluating the relationships between participants and organisations in a monitoring system.

The method is useful for providing insights into power structures and decision-making processes, as well as highlighting contrasting perceptions of different roles, responsibilities and linkages, pointing to areas of conflict, dispute and how they might be resolved.

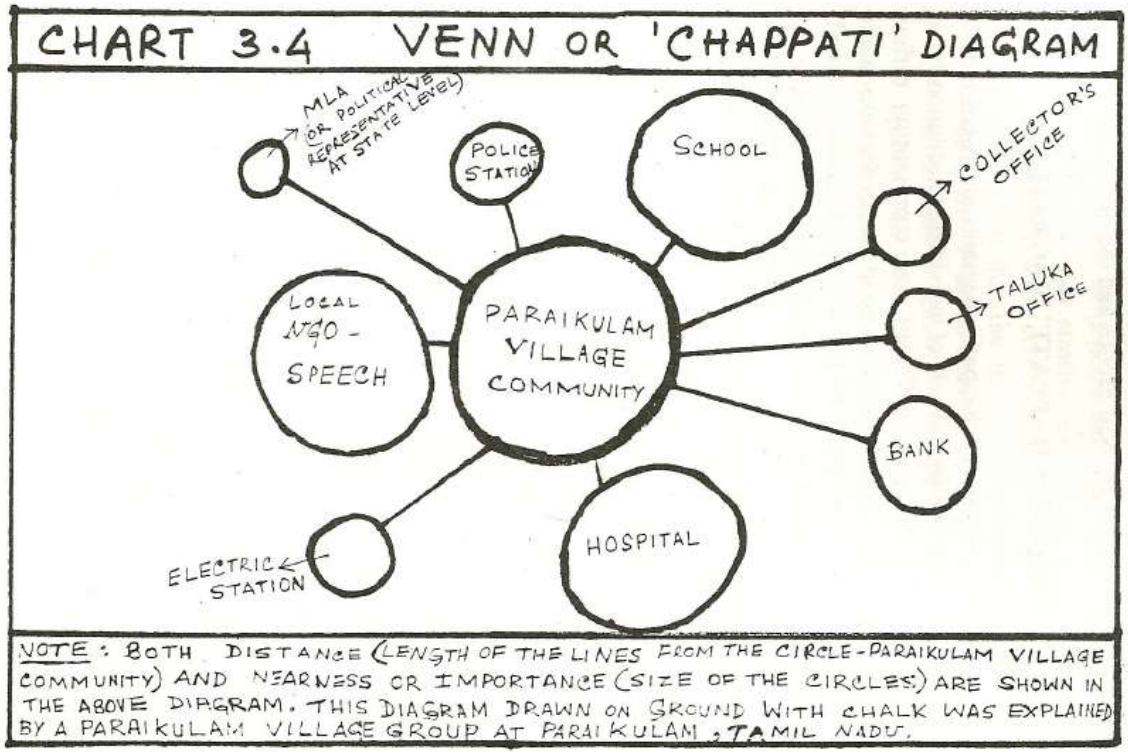
Venn diagram method

Participants draw or cut out circles of paper of different sizes and colour to represent institutions, bodies and people acting in a particular field in the community. The group places or draws the circles a chart relative to a circle representing themselves or the community in general. Larger circles represent greater importance of the institution. Space (within or distance outside the community) describes the relationship. Circles may overlap.

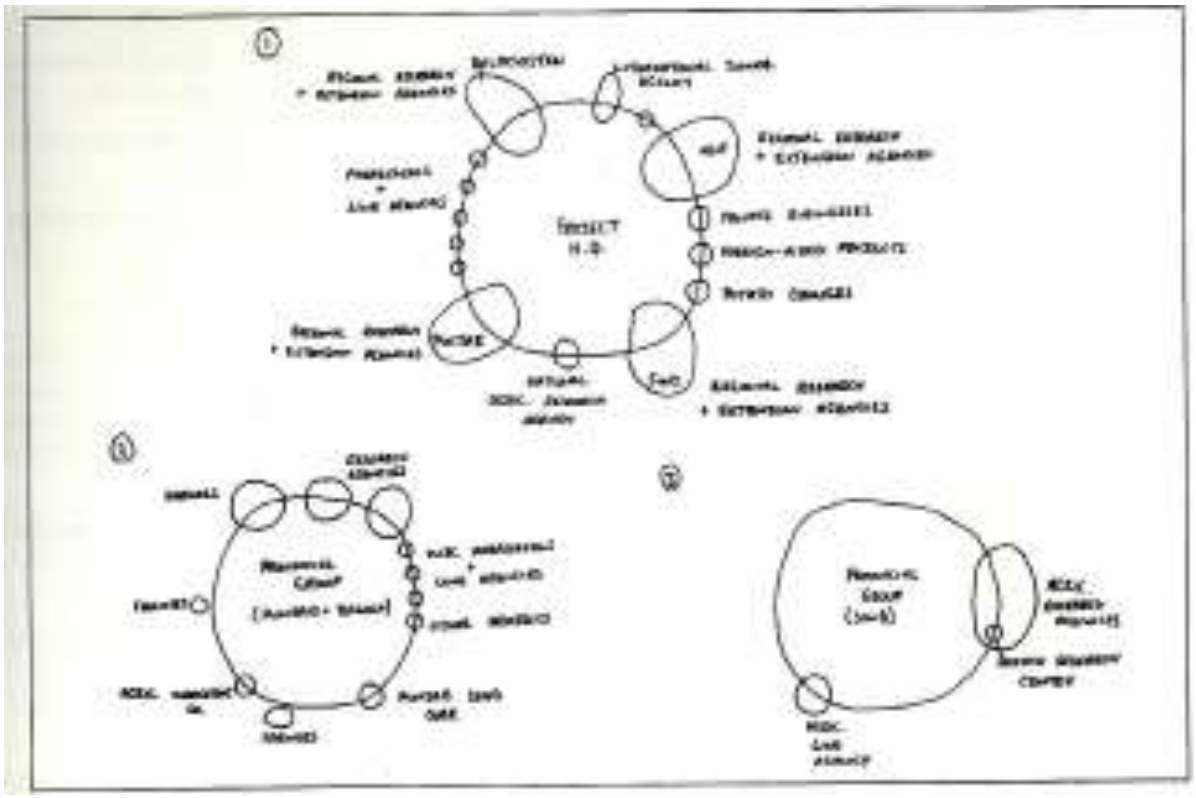
1. Clarify with the participants that the topic is the relative importance of people, groups and organisations and their interactions. Note that the word “importance” may have different interpretations, including the nature and quality of relationships, the diversity of linkages, the reasons for the contact and the frequency of contact..
2. Identify through discussion the different people, groups and organisations to be included. If there are many of these (e.g. more than 15 or 20) it is sensible select those most relevant to the topic.
3. Each entity is then identified with a circle – either cut out piece of paper, or a drawn circle. The starting point is the central element to which all other relate (the project, community, your organisation etc). Different colours may be used for ease of identification, but the size of each circle is crucial. Larger circles represent individuals, groups and organisations of greater importance to the central element. Each entity will have a different sized circle in order to represent its *relative importance* to the central element.

4. The circles are placed on the workspace in relation to the central element. The closer the circles are to the central element, or each other, the more interaction there is with the central element and each other, respectively. Overlapping circles represent groups or people with shared functions. A small circle within a larger circle represents a unit within a larger group or organisation.
5. Discussion of the diagram should focus on the quality, frequency, appearance or disappearance of linkages between groups.

Examples of Venn diagrams



Source: Mukherjee, N., 1997, Participatory Appraisal of Natural Resources



Petty J.N. et al , 1999, Participatory Learning and Action:
A Trainers Guide & IFAD, A Guide for Project M & E.