This page is intentionally left blank
Acknowledgements

This manual is based largely on the Austrian Development Agency’s “Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations” (2009), with additional material from a variety of other sources, duly referenced in the footnotes. The funding for the preparation of this manual was provided, in part, by the Royal Netherlands Embassy – Afghanistan through a grant for the Afghanistan Rights Monitor (ARM) project, awarded to APPRO-Europe in November 2015.

About the Authors

This handbook was compiled by APPRO’s Training Department comprising: Rozbih Mihran, Fauzia Rahimi Jamal, and Sear Sadat.

About APPRO

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) is an independent social research organization with a mandate to promote social and policy learning to benefit development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and other less developed countries through conducting social scientific research, monitoring and evaluation, and training and mentoring. APPRO is registered with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan as a non-profit, non-government organization and headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan with offices in Mazar-e Sharif (north), Herat (west), Kandahar (south), Jalalabad (east), and Bamyan (center). For more information, see: www.appro.org.af

APPRO is the founding member of APPRO-Europe, a network association for disseminating applied research findings from conflict environments, conducting training, and carrying out evaluations. For more information, see: www.appro-europe.net

APPRO also acts as the Secretariat for the National Advocacy Committee for Public Policy, comprising sub-committees on Education Food Security, Access to Justice, Anti-corruption, NAP 1325 and Access to Health. For more information, see: www.nac-pp.net

Contact: mail@appro.org.af and mail@appro-europe.net

APPRO takes full responsibility for all omissions and errors.

© 2017. Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization. Some rights reserved. This publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted for non-commercial purposes only and with written credit to APPRO. Where this publication is reproduced, stored or transmitted electronically, a link to APPRO’s website at www.appro.org.af should be provided. Any other use of this publication requires prior written permission, which may be obtained by writing to: mail@appro.org.af
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 5  
**Definitions** ..................................................................................................................... 5  

**Purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation** .............................................................................. 7  
**Differences Between Monitoring and Evaluation** ............................................................. 7  

**Monitoring** ....................................................................................................................... 8  
  **Input Monitoring** ........................................................................................................... 8  
  **Process Monitoring** ....................................................................................................... 8  
  **Output Monitoring** ......................................................................................................... 8  
  **Outcome Monitoring** ..................................................................................................... 8  
  **Impact Monitoring** ....................................................................................................... 8  
  **Implementation Monitoring** .......................................................................................... 8  
  **Results-based Monitoring** ............................................................................................ 9  

**Indicators for Monitoring** .................................................................................................. 9  

**Use of Indicators in Policy Making** .................................................................................. 11  

**Evaluations** ...................................................................................................................... 12  
  **Evaluation Ethics** .......................................................................................................... 12  
    **Objectivity of Evaluators** ........................................................................................... 12  
    **Independence of Evaluators** ..................................................................................... 12  
    **Participation** ............................................................................................................... 12  
    **Transparency And Focus** .......................................................................................... 12  
    **Reliability** ............................................................................................................... 12  
    **Completeness And Clarity** ......................................................................................... 12  
    **Fairness And Protection of Parties Involved** .............................................................. 13  
    **Utility** ....................................................................................................................... 13  
    **Evaluation Costs** ...................................................................................................... 13  

**Evaluation Criteria** ....................................................................................................... 13  

www.appro.org.af
Introduction


Definitions

**Monitoring:** The collection and analysis of systematic data for specified indicators about a project or program while the project / program is ongoing. Analysis of monitoring data can provide the implementers of the project / program and the main stakeholders with information on the extent of progress, achievement of objectives, and progress in the use of allocated funds. Findings from monitoring are used to establish trends toward predefined project / program objectives and take corrective action as necessary.

**Evaluation:** The retrospective and systematic assessment of a project, program, or selected components of a project or a program to establish the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of a project / program / component(s) part-way through or and at the end of the project / program. Findings from evaluations are used to for learning and to inform the design and implementation of future phases of a project / program / component(s) or similar endeavors in the future.

*Monitoring and evaluations may be conducted internally by dedicated project / program team members or externally by independent assessors.*1 In either case, monitoring and evaluations are carried out objectively and based on empirical evidence.

**Logical Framework:** A project management tool to compile all crucial information on design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of a project / program by detailing and linking resources needed to design and implement the project / program, activities to be undertaken meet overall and specific objectives of the project / program, risks and assumptions associated with the project / program, and how the ultimate success or failure of the project / program can be measured and verified.

**Baseline Assessment:** A baseline assessment is typically based on research into a situation, or a target area, at which programming intervention is aimed. The baseline report serves as the documented starting point of reference for assessing changes and impacts brought through intervention and the manner in which the intervention is being, or has been, implemented.

The data to be included in a baseline assessment is a function of the goals the intervention aims to accomplish, the theory of change for the intervention, and the indicators (see below) to be used to monitor the intervention and evaluate its impact. The data collected for a baseline assessment, and the subsequent monitoring and evaluation, may include official statistics, existing survey results, and reliable research reports, journals, and newspaper articles. It may also be necessary to collect new data in situations where the existing data is outdated or where operating conditions are continually changing.

In cases where new data are required, the baseline assessment should undertake situation analysis, stakeholder analysis, resource mapping, formal surveys, interviews and focus group discussions. Data collected during monitoring and evaluation must directly cross reference the indicators defined through conducting the baseline assessment. A baseline assessment is thus a crucial element of any monitoring and evaluation framework.

**Objectives Spectrum:** A project or program is designed and implemented to meet a series of objectives at different levels, from the very high level and general, i.e. the goal of a project / program, to the very low level and specific, i.e., the inputs required to implement a project / program. Figure 1 depicts the objectives spectrum, highlighting areas of focus for monitoring and evaluation.

![Figure 1. Objectives Spectrum](image)

**Indicators:** Qualitative and quantitative evidence of movement toward or away from project / program objectives at different levels of objectives (see Objectives Spectrum, above). An indicator provides a reasonably simple and reliable basis for assessing achievement, change, and performance. Indicators are normally developed at the start of the project cycle and should be the direct output of a baseline assessment to gauge the starting point (see Baseline Assessment, above).

---

Monitoring is mostly focused on the lower level objectives, i.e., inputs, activities, and outputs while evaluations can focus on any or all levels of objectives (Figure 1).

Scope: The breadth of monitoring or evaluation varies and can be encompass an entire project / program or only a part or parts of a project / program. Monitoring and evaluation can be applied to an activity, set of activities, project, program, strategy, policy, or organization.

Purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation

The aim of conducting monitoring and evaluation is to provide information that can help inform decisions, improve performance, and achieve planned results through:

- Providing consolidated information that could be analyzed to demonstrate progress in implementing activities, projects, programs, or policies
- Providing a means for agencies seeking to learn from their experiences and to incorporating learning into future phases of policy and practice
- Generating reports that contribute to transparency and accountability of the intervening body and allowing for lessons to be shared more widely
- Allowing actors to learn from each other’s experiences, building on expertise and adding to the body of knowledge
- Adding to retention and development of institutional memory
- Providing a basis for questioning and testing assumptions
- Providing a means of assessing the crucial links between decision makers, implementers, and beneficiaries
- Providing an empirical basis for demonstrating success, failure, and learning, influencing policy, and raising funds.\(^3\)

Differences Between Monitoring and Evaluation

Findings from monitoring reveal the current situation at any given time and over time relative to targets and outcomes, and are used to modify the inputs and activities on an ongoing basis to ensure that the project, program, or policy reaches its intended goal or outcome.

Evaluations are carried out to arrive at conclusions about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of an intervention at a certain point during the lifetime of the project, program, or policy or at the end. The results of evaluations are used to take corrective action for remainder of the project, program, or policy or, if carried out at the end, to inform decisions on future interventions.

Monitoring

Monitoring may be input- and activity-oriented or “results-based.” The selection of the orientation for monitoring is a function of what the monitoring entity wishes to accomplish, the efficiency of resource use and effectiveness in implementing activities or the outcomes and longer term impact of the intervention. In any event, a monitoring system may have one or more of the following elements.

Input Monitoring

Monitoring of financial, human, and material resources required for producing the desired outputs.

Process Monitoring

Monitoring the transformation process through which resources are turned into finished goods and/or services. This type of monitoring pays particular attention to monitoring the tasks carried out by the personnel to transform inputs to outputs.

Output Monitoring

Monitoring the goods and/or services produced immediately after the completion of the transformation process.

Outcome Monitoring

Monitoring of the effects of outputs on the target area or beneficiaries.

Impact Monitoring

Monitoring the longer term, systemic change in society as a product of the outcomes of the intervention.

Implementation Monitoring

Focuses on inputs, processes and outputs, and is typically carried out for projects which are smaller in size and not necessarily directly linked to a broader, multi-faceted strategy. Typically, implementation monitoring has the following features:

- Description of the problem or situation before the intervention
- Benchmarks for activities and immediate outputs
- Data collection on inputs, activities, and immediate outputs
- Systematic reporting on provision of inputs
- Systematic reporting on production of outputs
- Directly linked to a discrete intervention (or series of interventions)
- Designed to provide information on administrative, implementation, and management issues as
opposed to broader development effectiveness issues.

The guiding questions for traditional monitoring and evaluation focused on whether or not:

- Adequate and sufficient inputs were mobilized
- Agreed upon activities were being carried out and completed
- Agreed upon outputs (goods and/or services) were being delivered

**Results-based Monitoring**

Tends to be more systemic and systematic, covering a wider range of areas for examination by having the following features:

- Baseline assessment to describe the problem or situation before the intervention
- Indicators for outcomes (based on the information from the baseline assessment)
- Data collection on outputs and whether and how they contribute to meeting intervention objectives
- Establishing perceptions of change among stakeholders
- Systemic reporting through collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, paying particular attention to movement toward, or away, from intervention outcomes
- Involving the strategic partners of the intervention
- Establishing success or failure of partnership strategy in achieving desired intervention outcomes.

The guiding questions are expanded to establish whether or not:

- Outputs have resulted in (preferably measurable) outcomes consistent with the intervention objectives
- Outcomes have managed to have broader systemic impact resulting in, for example, a change of attitude
- Impacts are sustainable beyond the lifetime of the intervention.

**Indicators for Monitoring**

The value of a monitoring system in informing decisions on project or program implementation is a direct function of the indicators used in monitoring. A baseline assessment is a valuable source for defining useful and usable indicators to report on the performance of a project or program. In defining indicators, care must be taken to select indicators for which data is available and accessible.

The test of usefulness and usability of indicator is based on “SMART”ness of the indicators, consisting of the following characteristics:

---

4 These definitions and examples are taken from Save the Children, available from: [https://sites.google.com/site/savethechildrendme/Home/smart-indicators](https://sites.google.com/site/savethechildrendme/Home/smart-indicators)
Specific: The indicator has to be specific. It must be able to be translated into operational terms and made visible. While the outcome/result itself can be broad, the indicator should be narrow and focus on the ‘who’ and ‘what’ of the intervention. Additionally, ‘how’ and ‘where’ the ‘who’ is doing the ‘what’ is important to include in the indicator as it provides the action for the intervention.

Example: "Parents (who) will demonstrate positive relationships with their children (what) in their home environment (where) by an increase in nurturing communication, and appropriate and responsive care (how) at the time of exiting the program (when)."

Measurable: The indicator should be measurable, that is, it has the capacity to be counted, observed, analyzed, tested, or challenged. If one cannot measure an indicator, then progress cannot be determined. How will one know if the outcome has been achieved? Once an indicator is clear and specific, they can be measured in numerous ways; almost any indicator is in one way or another, measurable.

Example: X% of parents served (measurable) will demonstrate positive relationships with their children in their home environment by an increase in nurturing communication, and appropriate and responsive care at the time of exiting the program.

Achievable: The indicator is achievable if the performance target accurately specifies the amount or level of what is to be measured in order to meet the result/outcome. The indicator should be achievable both as a result of the program and as a measure of realism. The target attached to the indicator should be achievable.

Example: 85% of parents served (attainable?) will demonstrate positive relationships with their children in their home environment by an increase in nurturing communication, and appropriate and responsive care at the time of exiting the program.

Relevant: An indicator must be relevant. It should be a valid measure of the result/outcome and be linked through research and professional expertise. There is no reason to create an indicator which does not relate to the larger outcome. The indicator should be meaningful and important to the outcome to certify that the results are actually showing a related impact. Broad outcomes/results can and should have numerous specific and applicable indicators through which progress can be assessed. An indicator is relevant to the extent that it captures or measures a facet of the outcome that it is intended to measure. The best way to think about relevance is to ensure that there is a relationship between what the indicator measures and the theories that help create the outcomes for the client, program, or system. The best method to find relevant indicators is to consult expert input and proper research. The material culture, as it is called, typically discusses indicators for certain phenomena; for example child development, family functioning, and child abuse prevention.

Time-bound: The indicator is attached to a time frame. The indicator should state when it will be measured. If there is no time included on when to measure the indicator, how will anyone know if and when there is a result/outcome?

Example: 85% of parents served will demonstrate positive relationships with their children in their home environment by an increase in nurturing communication, and appropriate and responsive care at the time of exiting the program (time bound).
Use of Indicators in Policy Making

SMART indicators used in monitoring play an important role in the policy cycle, particularly in capturing stakeholder views, facilitating more open governance of the intervention, and enabling informed decision making.

To understand the use of indicators in the process of decision-making, we need to first look at the cycle of policy-making. Policy-making involves policy planning, implementation, evaluation and learning and adjustment. Indicators play a key role by helping to outline policy goals in specific terms, allowing monitoring the progress, evaluating against set criteria, and providing feedback to managers and the public about outcomes (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Policy Process

Assuming that a straightforward connection between specific policies and outcomes can be made, indicators can play a key role in continuous policy learning and adaptation.

A policy intent or goal is formulated into a policy statement. The policy is then taken up, interpreted, and applied to the target group. Its character and strength are influenced by the degree of understanding with which it is applied and the vigor with which it is enforced, monitored, and evaluated.

---

Evaluations

Evaluations may be carried out periodically or at the end of a project or program. Periodically, evaluation may be under taken at the end of set periods, e.g., annually, through the lifetime of a project or program. Typically, for projects and programs exceeding two years there are a mid-term and an end-term evaluation.

Evaluation Ethics

The following ethical principles should be adhered to in all types of evaluation.

Objectivity of Evaluators

Every evaluation needs to achieve a maximum level of objectivity and impartiality in its design and implementation.\(^6\) Statements of fact need to be methodically and clearly identified. Different perspectives and strengths and weaknesses must all be accounted for. All findings and recommendations must be supported by evidence and must be comprehensible.

Independence of Evaluators

The evaluators must have expert knowledge, be credible, and unrelated to the personnel of the project / program being evaluated.

Participation

An evaluation needs to be as participatory as possible through, for example, joint development of the terms of reference with the project partners and creation of opportunities for all relevant parties to comment on the results of the evaluation and the evaluation report.

Transparency And Focus

The evaluation assignment must be clearly defined and focused. There must be clear descriptions of the project or program, objectives of the evaluation, central questions, methodology, qualifications of the evaluation team, and reporting requirements. In most cases, an evaluation cannot cover all OECD/DAC evaluation criteria to the same extent. As such, a strict definition of the scope and priorities of the evaluation is essential.

Reliability

The utilization and preparation of basic data is necessary in order to prove the assessment and the conclusions in a credible fashion. The evaluation results stated in the evaluation report must be comprehensible.

Completeness And Clarity

The report has to be structured according to the OECD/DAC criteria and evaluation questions. All

---

evaluation questions must be answered.

**Fairness And Protection of Parties Involved**

Security, dignity and rights of the persons involved in the evaluation must be protected.

**Utility**

Evaluation recommendations are used for improving projects or programs. Feedback to political and operative decision makers must be guaranteed through a clear responsibility for the implementation of the evaluation results. The utility of an evaluation also depends on the most appropriate moment of the implementation within the project or program cycle.

**Evaluation Costs**

The expenditure of time and financial means of an evaluation need to be in a reasonable proportion to its benefits and the scope of the project or program. Normally, about 3–5 percent of the total project or program budget is should be spent on evaluations.

**Evaluation Criteria**

There have been standardized criteria for evaluations since the late 1950s, focusing mainly on educational assessment and conducted by social researchers and some academic institutions. Starting in the mid 1960s in the United States, the federal government made evaluations of past social and educational programs as the basis of its decision making on releasing new funds for new programs. By the 1990s there was increased emphasis by governments and various types of organization to use evaluation as the means to become more efficient and effective while learning from past experience in a systematic manner to inform future decision making on programming. Since the 2000s the emphasis in evaluations has shifted to participation, collaboration and learning.\(^7\)

Parallel to these developments, since the early 1960s the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had begun to emphasize the necessity and value of critical evaluations in development aid as a means to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and learning.\(^8\) A series of conferences organized by OECD in the 1970s resulted in the formation of a “Group of Correspondents on Aid Effectiveness”, tasked to:

1. Report on existing findings on aid effectiveness
2. Consider feedback into policy-making
3. Report on ways in which evaluation could be supportive of public information, and
4. Consider how to support evaluation work in developing countries.

OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) published the “Principles of Project Appraisal” in 1988, the first concrete step toward standardizing the manner in which evaluation of aid programming

---


was to take place. In subsequent years DAC produced several principles and good practices for technical assistance, program assistance, women in development, environmental assessment, and procurement. These were published together in “Development Assistance Manual, DAC Principles for Effective Aid” in 1992. DAC’s finalized “Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance” are Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability (Box 1).9

Box 1: DAC Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance:</th>
<th>The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. In evaluating the relevance of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness:</th>
<th>A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficiency:</th>
<th>Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Were activities cost-efficient?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were objectives achieved on time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact:</th>
<th>The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions. When evaluating the impact of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What has happened as a result of the programme or project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many people have been affected?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability:</th>
<th>Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. When evaluating the sustainability of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

In designing evaluations, it is important to be clear about scope (see Definitions, above). With the scope established, the following steps need to be taken to carry out the evaluation:

- Initiate “entrance conferences” to ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of the evaluation being carried out and are available and willing to collaborate with the evaluators throughout the evaluation process.
- Prepare a data request list and submit to the evaluation commissioning body.
- Review log frame, project reports, previous evaluations, and other documented information pertaining to the project.
- Review annual budgets and expenditure reports, budget guidelines and procedures, accounting procedures, salary schedules, organization charts, staffing ratios, strategic (or equivalent) plans, performance reports, and other relevant documents.
- Using the DAC Evaluation Criteria (Box 1), organize interviews with key stakeholders including project staff from the evaluation commissioning body, implementing organizations, representative sample of beneficiaries, relevant government authorities, and others as appropriate.
- Organize project site visits.
- Carry out analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from secondary sources such as reports and primary sources such as interview and focus group transcripts and survey forms.
- Present the preliminary findings based on the analysis of all available information to the evaluation commissioning body.
- Incorporate factual corrections, if any, into the findings.
- Finalize the evaluation report.