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Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation – A Manual

Contents

Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for the Project ‚Strategic Mainstreaming of Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Viet Nam‘

After indicator tables have been prepared, it is very important to utilize them in a strategic and targeted way. This manual is created to support the successful implementation of M&E for the pilot activities of the project ‘Strategic Mainstreaming of Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Viet Nam’. A step-by-step guide on how to conduct the Monitoring and Evaluation shall be offered here. It is however very important to stress that context-dependent changes and adjustments of the procedures will be needed on the ground.

BEFORE THE FIELD

STEP 1: REMEMBER WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT

Before you go into the field to collect data, it is important to remind yourself of

What you are going to do	**Here, remember what M&E actually is:** Monitoring is *“the* **collection and analysis** *of informationabout a project or programme”.* ***Evaluation*** *is “the periodic, retrospective* ***assessment*** *of an organisation, project or programme that might be conducted internally or by external independent evaluators”* (University of Oxford 2014). You are thus trying to **collect, analyze and assessdata** on the pilot activities conducted as part of the project ‘Strategic Mainstreaming of Ecosystem-based Adaptation’.
Why you are doing it/ What the goals of your M&E are	Monitoring and evaluation is very important for every project to ✓ **Track implementation and outputs** systematically ✓ Measure the **effectiveness** of a project ✓ Build up the **evidence base** for ecosystem-based adaptation ✓ Create **lessons learned** to improve EbA measures This is what you want to achieve with your M&E. Keep that in mind when planning your M&E activities. In addition, it is important to remember that you are doing a **results-based** M&E. This means that you also want to use your M&E to find out whether or not the activities of the project are actually contributing to the overall objective of the pilot activities (World Bank 2004). For Quang Binh, this would be *‘People in the pilot area are less vulnerable and can easily adapt to the impacts of climate change’.* For Ha Tinh, the overall goal is *‘Farmers in Village 1 - Son Tho commune area able to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change’.*

STEP 2: PLAN YOUR M&E

In addition to remembering the how and why of your M&E, you also need to make sure that everything is planned well. That means that when making your operational plan for a year or longer in advance, you need to look at the process-, outcome- and impact indicators identified, and define

What needs to be measured when	For the Quang Binh process indicator *'13 trainings on climate change and how to react to it are provided for a total of 650 participants in Hoa Binh village, Quang Trach district and four other communes in Quang Binh province within one year (2016 – 2017). For Hoa Binh village, men and women receive the training equally. For the other four communes, women, youth union- and farmer association members are prioritized'*, this would mean you need to make sure that information is gathered on this indicator by the end of 2017, and define responsibilities within DONRE, district and commune (see information highlighted withdark greencircles below).
Who is in charge of what (data gathering, storage,analysis) for the time frame in focus	
The budget available for M&E for the time frame in focus	Here, you want to calculate both how much it will cost to prepare and conduct the data gathering and if/how much money you willneed for the analysis of and further working with the data within the time frame of your operational plan (see information highlighted with light green circles below).

Indicator	Data need (how do you intend to quantify the indicator?)	Data source (where will the data come from?)	Data collection method (which methods will be used, frequency)	Data analysis method (how will the data be analysed?)	Responsibility (who will be responsible for collection, analysis, storage?)	Costs (what are the estimated costs?)
13 trainings on climate change and how to react to it are provided for a total of 650 participants in Hoa Binh village, Quang Trach district and four other communes in Quang Binh province within one year (2016 – 2017). For Hoa Binh village, men and women receive the training equally. For the other four communes, women, youth union- and farmer association members are prioritized.	- no. of trainings conducted - no. of participants that attended the trainings - no. of communes where trainings have been conducted - distribution male and female participants (in absolute numbers or percentages) for trainings	- primary data (fieldwork) - secondary data (project reports, training reports)	- interviews - document review - once at the end of 2017	Description in text form and absolute numbers and visualization (graphs) for distributions	- district and commune for collecting data - DONRE for analysing, storing and reporting	This category needs to be filled in by the monitoring institution

Based on the data need and data collection method categories, you should then

Formulate both overall questions that need to be answered based on the data need provided in the indicator table, and specific sub-questions to these overall questions. It is recommended to involve the people who	For the above indicator, questions could be '*How many trainings have been conducted?', or 'How was the distribution of male and female participants', with the sub-question 'how many men have participated in training xy?'*, or *'Did more men than women participate in training xy, and if yes, why?'* (see dark green arrows in above table). For the outcome and impact indicators, focus is less and less on 'material facts', and more and more on change (in knowledge, understanding, behavior etc.). Try to formulate **questions that capture this change**, by for instance asking about how certain behaviors/

are going to collect the data in the formulation process	knowledge have evolved/changed in comparison to the baseline data which was gathered, and what has led to this change (to also capture if change was created through something else than the project activities) (University of Oxford 2014).
Identify how you can get the information you need and what is sufficient in terms of answering your questions	Based on your questions, you now want to refine your data collection method. This means to figure out which information you can best find in documents (if documents are recommended in the data collection method column), and which by talking to people; what kind of documents and how many documents you need (data source) and how you can get them; how you can best find the answer to your questions in the document (what exact method of document review you want to use); who you need to talk to and how (group- or individual interviews, structured or semi-structured interviews, surveys etc.); how many people you need to talk to and how you can best reach them (i.e. are there any gatekeepers) (points related to this are highlighted with light green arrows).
Potentially refine questions	You might want to revise your questions based on the method specification you have done in the step before.

IN THE FIELD

It is now time to go into the field and collect the data you need. Here, it is important to

Plan sufficient time for the data collection	You might not be able to talk to everyone you need to talk to right away, or it might take time until people actually open up to you. Furthermore, longer, more qualitatively oriented conversations might be needed.
Take very thorough notes	It might seem like you will be able to remember everything when you are in the field, but especially when you gather more extensive data, there are many details you will forget. So, try to write everything down that appears important or remarkable, takes notes, draw things, write down additional questions that arise along the way.
Expect the unexpected	Of course, the goal of the M&E is to prove that the pilot activities of the EbA project have produced positive and effective outputs in terms of adaptation. However, the reason for using a theory of change when preparing the results framework was that changes from planned developments are normal. So, when going to the field, be prepared that things might not be the way we planned them to be, and be open for changes, different development and outcomes, and try to understand where they come from. The following points should be kept in mind: ✓ What is the different outcome? Is it better, worse, or just different from what was planned and expected? ✓ What created the different outcome? Our results framework makes use of very specific assumptions. Maybe, these assumptions were wrong, or did not include enough factors (plants didn't grow the way we expected them to; people don't understand information or even if they do, they do not make use of it, which is what we assumed they would; other factors such as external economic developments were not included in the assumptions). Or maybe, other external changes occurred which we could not plan for.

	✓ Can positive (or negative) changes be attributed to our project/our work? Or were changes based on other factor or actors, and we actually did not manage to contribute to this change? This point might be very hard to prove, as ideally, you would also talk to a 'control community' which did not get our support, to see how their situation has evolved. This, however, is very time consuming. It is easier to ask 'your community' what they think how different factors and actors(project- and not project-related)have influenced their situation since the project has started (University of Oxford 2014).
Accept the unexpected	Again, it is important to keep in mind that it is ok if **things did not work out the way we planned** them, and that the main thing is to figure out why they did not, and to be flexible. If, when assessing the process indicators, you already realize that things are turning out differently than planned, try to **understand the reasons**, and adjust the results framework and the indicators accordingly!

AFTER THE FIELD

Monitoring and evaluation is only useful if **you use your data after you have gathered it.** This is what happens after the field visits. It is highly important that the data is **updated, assessed and analyzed on a regular basis,** to actually be able to notice change and react to unexpected developments (University of Oxford 2014).

STEP 1: ANALYSIS

Once you have returned from the field, it is important that you

Do a thorough handover	Ensure that you know who is supposed to analyze and strategically store the data you gathered, and that these people have time to work with the data. Then explain to them in detail what you have been doing, what the results were, if anything extraordinary was found etc. Ideally, the people who were involved in the data gathering will at least support the data analysis.
Review and select your data analysis method	Even though a rough method might have been defined in the indicator tables (for the process indicator below, this would for instance be 'Description in text form and absolute numbers and visualization (graphs) for distributions'; see dark green arrowin the table below), you most probably will have to specify this method, or even revise it entirely. Some important tips here are: ✓ For **qualitative information**: Identify categories, themes & data (this is called 'coding'; interpret findings in relation to your research question in text form; watch out for unintended results & data that does not fit your expectations ✓ For **quantitative information**: Calculate simple totals, averages, and percentages, and do statistical tests if appropriate (University of Oxford 2014)
Work with the changes you have found	When you find that things are going differently than planned, analyze the reasons for this, and **work with your findings**! For instance, this might mean that the results framework and the **indicators need to be adjusted,** or that **assumptions need to be changed**. Or, you might find out that certain things just don't work the way we expected them to. Then turn this into writing and communicate and share your knowledge, so that others can learn from it!

Indicator	Data analysis method (how will the data be analysed?)	Responsibility (who will be responsible for collection, analysis, storage?)
13 trainings on climate change and how to react to it are provided for a total of 650 participants in Hoa Binh village, Quang Trach district and four other communes in Quang Binh province within one year (2016 – 2017). For Hoa Binh village, men and women receive the training equally. For the other four communes, women, youth union- and farmer association members are prioritized.	Description in text form and absolute numbers and visualization (graphs) for distributions	- district and commune for collecting data - DONRE for analysing, storing and reporting

STEP 2: COMMUNICATE

Depending on your findings, you might also want to communicate them to relevant stakeholders. This can be both within and outside of DONRE, for instance to ISPONRE. This might involve:

- ✓ Deciding who the key audience for specific information and findings is (community groups, communities, donors, policy makers, the media etc.)
- ✓ Tailoring and packaging the data to key stakeholders/audiences > how do you best present your data and information?
- ✓ Converting data into graphs, pie charts etc.
- ✓ Drawing out key lessons for key stakeholders/audiences

The information you gather could also be incorporated into annual reports, or provide useful background documentation for people who want to know more about the pilot activities and how they are evolving.

Sources:

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