

# Monitoring & Evaluation

*This brief is one in a series of tips for civil society organizations written from a funder's perspective. It is intended to stimulate inquiry, rather than to provide rigid instructions.*

## Tips for Strengthening Organizational Capacity

### Monitoring & Evaluation

Tips for reviewing and assessing progress towards objectives, identifying problems and strategies, and making adjustments to plans.

These tips include sections on purpose of monitoring and evaluation, strategic questions, and a step-by-step tips on designing monitoring and evaluation for your project.

### Project Development

Tips for developing and implementing a project and key questions to ask in the process.

### Budgeting

Tips for preparing a budget with an emphasis on its purpose, steps, and components.

### Financial Systems

Tips for establishing an accountable and transparent financial system to build financial sustainability.

### Resource Mobilization

Tips for mobilizing resources closer to home to strengthen organizational capacity and deliver benefits to the community.

### Grant Proposal Writing

Tips for developing and writing a proposal, including critical elements to facilitate project success.

### Reporting to Funders

Tips for maintaining and strengthening your relationship with funders following a grant award

## PURPOSE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

What development interventions make a difference? Is the project having the intended results? What can be done differently to better meet goals and objectives? These are the questions that monitoring and evaluation allow organizations to answer.

Monitoring and evaluation are important management tools to track your progress and facilitate decision making. While some funders require some type of evaluative process, the greatest beneficiaries of an evaluation can be the community of people with whom your organization works. By closely examining your work, your organization can design programs and activities that are effective, efficient, and yield powerful results for the community. Definitions are as follows:

**Monitoring** can be defined as a continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results. An ongoing intervention might be a project, program or other kind of support to an outcome. Monitoring helps organizations track achievements by a regular collection of information to assist timely decision making, ensure accountability, and provide the basis for evaluation and learning.

**Evaluation** is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program, or policy, and its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and

useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision making process of both recipients and donors.

## STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

In conducting monitoring and evaluation efforts, the specific areas to consider will depend on the actual intervention, and its stated outcomes. Areas and examples of questions include:

- **Relevance:** Do the objectives and goals match the problems or needs that are being addressed?
- **Efficiency:** Is the project delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent does the intervention achieve its objectives? What are the supportive factors and obstacles encountered during the implementation?
- **Impact:** What happened as a result of the project? This may include intended and unintended positive and negative effects.
- **Sustainability:** Are there lasting benefits after the intervention is completed?

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## COMMON TERMS

Monitoring and evaluation take place at different levels. The following box defines the common terms with examples.

<b>INPUTS</b> The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention. <i>Technical Expertise</i> <i>Equipment</i> <i>Funds</i>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> Actions taken or work performed. <i>Training workshops conducted</i>
<b>OUTPUTS</b> The products, capital goods, and services that result from a development intervention. <i>Number of people trained</i> <i>Number of workshops conducted</i>
<b>OUTCOMES</b> The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects or changes of an intervention's outputs. <i>Increased skills</i> <i>New employment opportunities</i>
<b>IMPACTS</b> The long-term consequences of the program, may be positive and negative effects. <i>Improved standard of living</i>

## STEP-BY-STEP: Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

Steps for designing a monitoring and evaluation system depend on what you are trying to monitor and evaluate. The following is an outline of some general steps you may take in thinking through at the time of planning your activities:

1. **Identify who will be involved in the design, implementation, and reporting.** Engaging stakeholders helps ensure their perspectives are understood and feedback is incorporated.
2. **Clarify scope,** purpose, intended use, audience, and budget for evaluation.
3. **Develop the questions** to answer what you want to learn as a result of your work.
4. **Select indicators.** Indicators are meant to provide a clear means of measuring achievement, to help assess the performance, or to reflect changes. They can be either quantitative and/or qualitative. A process indicator is information that focuses on how a program is implemented.
5. **Determine the data collection methods.** Examples of methods are: document reviews, questionnaires, surveys, and interviews.

6. **Analyze and synthesize the information you obtain.** Review the information obtained to see if there are patterns or trends that emerge from the process.
7. **Interpret these findings, provide feedback, and make recommendations.** The process of analyzing data and understanding findings should provide you with recommendations about how to strengthen your work, as well as any mid-term adjustments you may need to make.
8. **Communicate your findings and insights to stakeholders and decide how to use the results to strengthen your organization's efforts.**

Monitoring and evaluation not only help organizations reflect and understand past performance, but serve as a guide for constructive changes during the period of implementation.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For information on setting up and using a monitoring and evaluation system, see the *Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit* on the CIVICUS website, [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org).

For practical information, tools, and guidance on supporting NGOs and CBO, see the section on monitoring and evaluation on the International HIV/AIDS Alliance website, NGO support toolkit, on the website: [www.ngosupport.net](http://www.ngosupport.net).

For building practical skills on promoting community health and development, see the 250 topics in English and Spanish in the *Community Toolbox*, on the website: <http://ctb.ku.edu/tools>.

For definition of key evaluation terms, download OECD's *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (2002), available in English, French, and Spanish at [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

Note: This brief was developed partially based on materials from the International Program for Development Evaluation Training, a course offered by the World Bank and Carleton University.



The World Bank Small Grants Program is one of the few global programs of the World Bank that provides direct grants to civil society organizations through the World Bank's Country Offices. The Small Grants Program seeds and supports activities related to civic engagement that empower and enable citizens to take initiatives to influence development outcomes.

[www.worldbank.org/smallgrantsprogram](http://www.worldbank.org/smallgrantsprogram)  
Social Development Department - The World Bank

Tips by Yumi Sera and Susan Beaudry, 2007