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CORE CONCEPTS IN DEVELOPING MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

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1. DEFINITIONS OF MONITORING & EVALUATION

The following definitions can be used to understand the two inter-related functions:

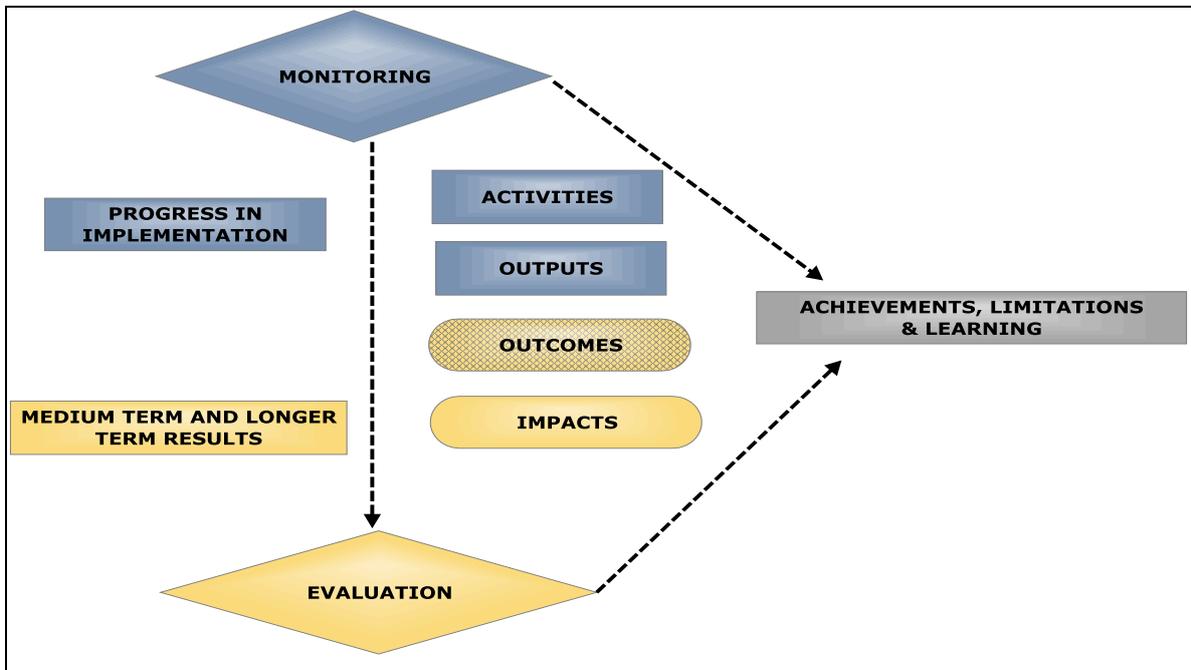
Monitoring

The continuous and systematic collection and analysis of information (data) in relation to a program or project that is able to provide management and key stakeholders with an indication as to the extent of progress against stated goals and objectives. Monitoring focuses on processes (activities and outputs) but also monitors outcomes and impacts as guided by an accompanying Evaluation Plan.

Evaluation

Planned and periodic assessment of program or project results in key areas (e.g. appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability). The evaluation builds on the monitoring process and by identifying the level of short to medium-term outcomes and longer term impacts achieved; the intended and unintended effects of these achievements; and approaches that worked well and those that did not work as well; identifying the reasons for success or failure and learning from both. The evaluation process will also provide a level of judgment as to the overall value of the program or project.

Diagram 1: The Relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation



2. FUNCTIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF MONITORING & EVALUATION:

Monitoring and Evaluation should generally support the three main functions of:

- Accountability to funding bodies and key stakeholders;
- Project management; and
- Facilitation of learning to achieve results.

Monitoring and Evaluation should include the main principles of:

- **Positioning Monitoring and Evaluation** at a point within the organisation where it is referred to during organisational decision making and resource allocation processes
- Use of **Multi-Method Data Collection** for the establishment of progress toward or achievement of processes (outputs) and impacts (outcomes)
- Mindful **Stakeholder Involvement and Engagement** in both the design and implementation of the Framework
- Use of **Stakeholder Perceptions** of change and/or validation of the program logic
- Use of **Systematic Reporting** of progress toward achievement of outcomes and impacts including identification of successes and failures
- Adoption of a **Learning Strategy** to analyse and reflect on the data generated by the Framework

Central steps and stages in developing a monitoring and evaluation framework include:

- Developing a **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy**: Who is to be involved in the process and how?
- Developing a **Program Logic**: Outlining diagrammatically what the program has been established to achieve
- Developing **Evaluation Questions**: Agreement about what is to be known about how the program operates
- Producing a **Monitoring Plan**: Identifying how to answer the evaluation questions through monitoring processes and the development of associated indicators and targets
- Producing an **Evaluation Plan**: Identifying how to answer evaluation questions through formative and summative evaluation activities
- Developing an **Evaluation Methodology**: Identifying how to implement the evaluation and what evaluation methods can be used to collect required data
- Developing an **Evaluation Rubric**: Agreement about the criteria for measuring success or good practice
- Developing a **Data Collection and Analysis Strategy**
- Developing **an Implementation, Reporting, Learning and Reflection Strategy**
- Developing **Data Collection Instruments and Tools** to capture the required data

3. STAKEHOLDERS:

Stakeholders are funders, government agencies, non-government organisations, other organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct interest in the program and its monitoring and evaluation. They potentially include:

- Government officials, policy makers, service and contract managers
- Funders and Donors
- Program Board Members, managers and program delivery personnel
- Service users, clients or beneficiaries
- Community interest groups or associations

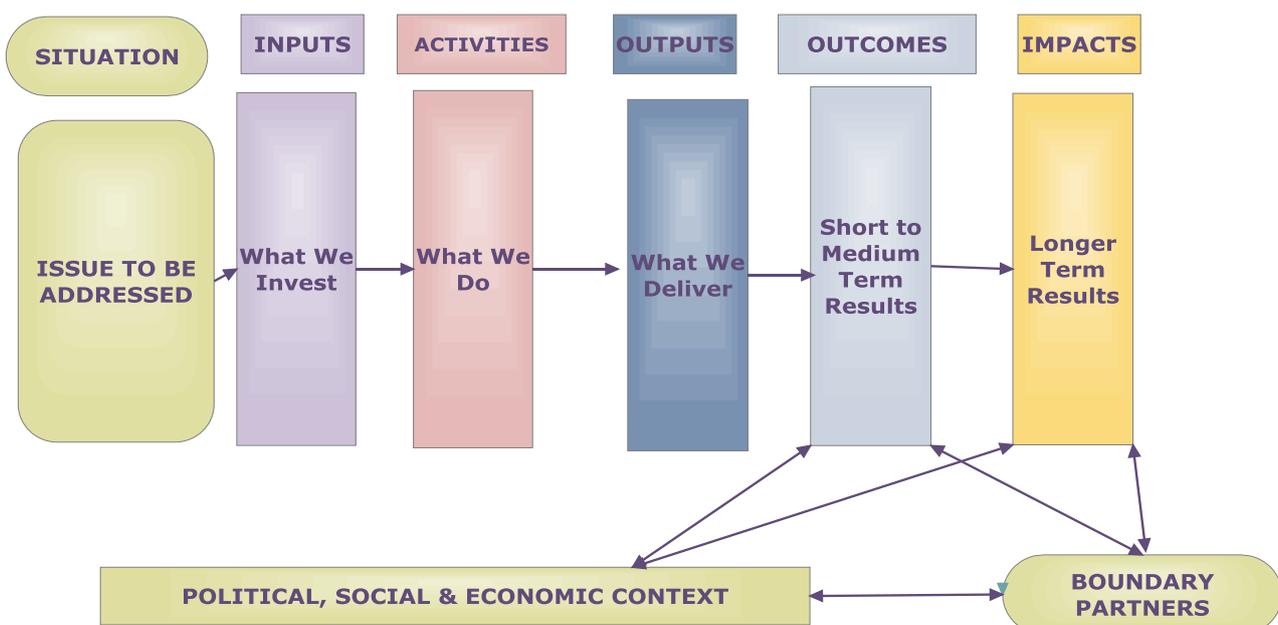
Consider whether:

- A stakeholder mapping and analysis was conducted
- Key stakeholder groups are clearly identified
- It is clearly determined how key stakeholders will be involved in the process
- There is a process for review of stakeholder groups and their involvement over time

4. PROGRAM LOGIC:

A Program logic model identifies the expected outcomes and impacts arising from program activities and outputs and presents a results chain or indication of how the activities and outputs are expected to lead to the achievement of the intended outcomes and impacts.

Diagram 2: Program Logic Model



- **Inputs:** (financial, human and material resources)
- **Activities:** (tasks personnel undertake to transform inputs into outputs)
- **Outputs:** (program products including those relevant to the achievement of outcomes)
- **Outcomes:** (likely or achieved short to medium-term effects from outputs in fulfilment of purpose)
- **Impacts:** (long-term effects, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, against purpose)

5. EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

A distinguishing feature of the approach proposed is the centrality of developing evaluation questions to guide the process of developing the Monitoring Plan and the Evaluation Plan which form part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. It is critical for the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to be useful that we first identify the key questions we want our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to answer.

What are the key questions we want our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to answer?

- Has the program logic been used to generate clear and concise evaluation questions?
- Have questions been organised using headings such as appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (see definitions below)?
- Are the questions that have been developed cohesive and logical?
- Is the number of questions right when matched to the scope and resourcing of the M&E Framework?
- Are the questions asked evaluatively: to what extent? To what degree? How much?
- Are the questions clear, dealing with one concept at a time, and not double-barrelled?
- Do the questions link to the monitoring data that can be collected and is available?
- Do the questions link to evaluation data that may be collected?
- Have questions been posed that cannot be answered with the data that is available?

The domains selected for ordering evaluation questions in this approach are based on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Evaluation Criteria. The OECD/DAC guidelines are based on the six general principles of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The term relevance has been replaced with appropriateness in this Guide as it is considered to suggest wider accommodation of the interests and needs of all concerned parties including funders and donors, key stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Further adjustments have been made in this Guide to broaden the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria. There are a number of important evaluation dimensions such as that of process evaluation that require inclusion. Two aspects here include the question of whether the program was implemented in the most appropriate manner, and the concept of 'Fidelity of Implementation': the extent to which the program was implemented as designed and reasons for variations. Both concepts have been included under the Appropriateness domain. Additionally, there is need for mention of quality as a criterion for assessing a program. This has been included under the Effectiveness domain.

The following definitions are based on a review of the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria customised for this Guide.

Appropriateness	A measure of whether a program's design and approach is suitable in terms of achieving its desired effect and working in its given context. Suitability may apply, for example, to whether the program is of an appropriate type or style to meet the needs of all identified major stakeholder groups. The extent to which the program was implemented in the most appropriate manner and the extent it was implemented as intended, with reasons for variations.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the program and broader stakeholder objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. The overall assessed quality of the program.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Impact	Positive and negative, longer-term effects produced by a program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, particularly at a structural or systemic level.
Sustainability	The continuation of a program, its support or its benefits after initial funding.

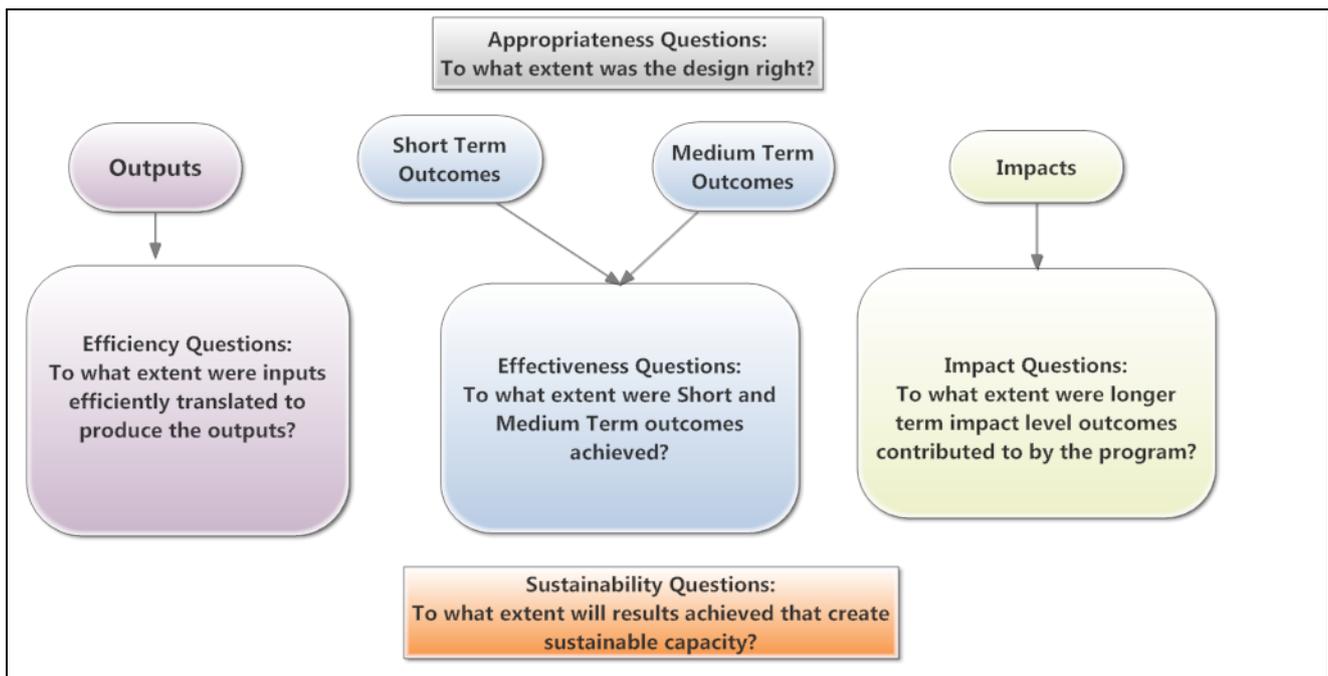
The following questions can form useful over-arching headline Evaluation Questions:

Appropriateness	To what extent was the design of the program suitable for addressing the intended identified needs?
Effectiveness	To what degree was the program able to achieve or contribute to its intended objectives? To what extent did the program achieve or contribute to its intended Theory of Change/Program Logic?
Efficiency	To what degree did the program operate in a cost-effective way?
Impact	To what extent was the program able to contribute to longer term structural or systemic changes?
Sustainability	To what degree did the program build potential or capacity for ongoing results? To what extent should ongoing support for a program of this type be provided?
Value	What is the overall assessment of the quality of the program? What is the assessment of the overall value of the program to the different stakeholder groups?

Common Core Evaluation Questions can include the following:

Appropriateness	<p>To what extent did the program design meet funder needs?</p> <p>To what extent was the program design appropriate in meeting beneficiary needs?</p> <p>To what extent was the program model implemented in the most appropriate manner?</p> <p>To what extent was the program model implemented as intended, and if not, why not?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>How well did the program achieve its intended outcomes?</p> <p>To what extent did the program meet the needs of its intended beneficiaries?</p> <p>To what degree can the program be assessed as being of good quality?</p>
Efficiency	<p>To what extent was the program implemented in a cost-effective way?</p> <p>To what extent was the budget available adequate to deliver the program?</p>
Impact	<p>To what degree were there identified changes in population level trends that can be associated with the program?</p>
Sustainability	<p>To what degree was there an indication that there will be ongoing results?</p> <p>To what extent has the program built capacity related to its intent?</p> <p>To what extent can the program or its components be replicated based on the learnings made?</p>

The Program Logic should provide a main source for developing a set of evaluation questions. While the appropriateness and sustainability domains provide a ‘topping and tailing effect’ complementary to the intent of the Program Logic, the efficiency, effectiveness and impact domains can be directly related to the contents of the Program Logic developed for the program. This is illustrated in the Diagram below:



6. THE MONITORING PLAN:

The ongoing collection and analysis of routine information used to both monitor the progress of implementation and to determine whether results are being contributed to or achieved. Using evaluation questions determine how the questions posed will be answered through the collection and analysis of monitoring data.

Questions can be answered using the selection of:

- Monitoring against program goals and objectives (Is the program achieving what it intended?)
- Monitoring program outputs in key areas (what the program has delivered)
- Monitoring short to intermediate term outcomes (what the program has started to achieve/achieved in key result areas)
- Monitoring changes against a baseline (what changes have occurred over time)
- Financial monitoring (how have funds and resources been used)
- Monitoring management and administrative arrangements and processes (what processes have been used during program implementation)
- Monitoring key areas such as stakeholder relationships (what are the views of stakeholders of the progress of the program against the stated program logic)

Indicators are a measure that when tracked over time, indicate progress (or not) toward a specific target. Indicators should be neutral. There are two broad sets of indicators: process and impact indicators. A process indicator would be one used for measuring outputs. Impact indicators are used for measuring outcomes and impacts.

Consider the questions below:

- Are there clear indicators developed for the outputs?
- Are there suitable indicators identified for the outcomes?
- Are the indicators developed using a baseline to track progress over time?
- Are the indicators likely to show that the objectives have been met?
- Are the indicators that have been developed SMART:

Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely

- Has there been an analysis as to whether the information necessary for indicators is available?
- Have the indicators been developed on the basis of what is data needed to measure outputs and outcomes rather than what data is available?
- Who is responsible for developing indicators?
- Have the indicators been used and tested and if so how often are they reviewed?
- Is there a process for liaising with stakeholders about how indicators are working in practice?
- Is the set of indicators developed realistic and achievable?
- Are the indicators that have been selected worth the cost of collecting the data?
- Are indicators augmented with other sources of data that provide complementary information and more explanatory?
- Do the indicators form part of a suite of measures rather than used as a stand-alone measure?

TARGETS indicate the number, timing and location of that which is to be realised. Targets are the quantifiable levels of the indicators that the organisation wants to achieve by a given time.

A target can be incorporated into an indicator or sit adjacent to it for example:

Indicator: By end of 2013, 50% of adolescents aged 12-16 years of age living in community A will have attended and completed Program X.

OR

Indicator: Percentage of adolescents aged 12-16 years of age completing Program X

Target: 50% completion by end of 2012

Indicators can be quantitative (as above) and/or qualitative, for example:

Indicator: Positive feedback from adolescents at completion of Program X demonstrates satisfaction with the style and content of the Program.

- Are there targets within the indicators?
- Are there targets alongside indicators?
- How were targets decided?
- Was previous performance/base-line data considered in developing targets?
- Were expected funding and resource levels taken into account in developing targets?
- How was it decided that the targets developed were feasible?
- Are the targets regularly reviewed?
- Are targets flexible in case of diminished resources?
- Who is responsible for determining targets?
- Who is responsible for liaising with stakeholders about targets?

The Monitoring Plan

Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators (when appropriate)	Targets	Data Sources	When Collected and Analysed	Responsibility
Appropriateness					
Effectiveness					
Efficiency					
Impact					
Sustainability					

7. THE EVALUATION PLAN:

The collection and analysis of information to determine answers to formative and summative evaluation questions in order to understand whether and how a program is meeting its stated objectives and its outcomes and impacts

- Will evaluations occur at both formative and summative stages of the Program, or cover formative and summative areas of enquiry?
- Is there a strategy for undertaking systematic and periodic evaluations?
- Has funding been set aside for evaluative activities?
- Is there a plan for when evaluations will take place (bi-annual, mid-term, end of project) and what form they will be in (internal/external)?
- Is the Evaluation Plan set out in a similar manner to the Matrix presented below?

The Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Questions	Data derived from Monitoring (as identified in Monitoring Plan)	Sources of Information from Evaluation	Data Collection Methods	Responsibility	Time Frame
Appropriateness					
Effectiveness					
Efficiency					
Impact					
Sustainability					

8. DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT:

Data Collection Strategies

- What sorts of data collection methods are included in the framework (e.g. multi-method)?
- Was the process used for deciding on data collection methods outlined and documented?
- What kinds of data are collected (qualitative, quantitative, focused on outputs or outcomes)?
- Are any innovative data collection methods being used that are designed for the context?
- Are the challenges faced in data collection openly identified and addressed?
- Are there protocols in place between funders and funded programs or peak bodies regarding the collection and use of data collected?
- How is accuracy of data collected verified?
- Are programs encouraged to use data collected for their own internal learning and evaluation?
- Is there a system in place for the review of the data collected based on feedback re ease of collection and utility of the data?

Data Management

- Is there a management information system/database established for ease of data collection and analysis?
- What is its capacity to generate required reports? Can it cross tabulate different variables?
- What technology is available to support the data system (hardware, software, IT support)?
- What is the relationship between those who collect, enter and provide data reports and those who analyse the findings emerging from the data?
- Can data reports be produced on a regular and timely basis to allow tracking of progress?
- Is there a strategy for ensuring ease and accuracy of data collection systems designed for programs that may have limited capacity?
- Is the data system expensive to operate in relation to its value?

Data Methods: Do data collection methods include the following (if applicable):

PROCESS

- Demographic data on the target group accessing the program
- Reports on numbers, types, frequency of outputs delivered
- Program performance against specified output level indicators and targets

OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Program performance against specified outcome level indicators and targets
- Interviews/focus groups and/or surveys with key stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Reviews of records and other documentation
- Before/after instruments (pre-testing/post-testing)
- Collection of panel survey data over time intervals (longitudinal)
- Comparison of program results against matched sample program results (quasi-experimental)
- Experimental impact assessment designs (if appropriate)
- Testing the program logic with key stakeholder audiences
- Changes to demographic characteristics of geographic areas or program users (census and other population level data)

9. LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

- How well are the learning and communication aspects identified?
- Are there opportunities to bring stakeholders together to reflect on the learnings generated by the M&E process?
- Are there clearly identified mechanisms for utilising the findings from monitoring and evaluation activities?
- How well are promising interventions, innovative approaches and lessons learned identified?

Reporting Process

- Are the types of reports or other written products that will be produced during the M&E cycle and when they will be produced specified?
- Are the audiences for these reports identified?
- Are the potential audiences for the reports identified?
- Is the purpose of the reports explained (e.g. accountability, education, influence, promotion of reflection and learning)?
- Is reporting tailored to different audience needs?
- Do stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness of reporting?

Reporting Influence

- Do M&E reports inform and guide decision making and resource allocation processes?
- Do M&E reports inform funders, policy developers, decision-makers and key stakeholders about progress toward program, objectives and outcomes?
- Depending on the purpose of the M&E reports, do they assist with:
 - Responding to demands for accountability
 - Formulation and justification of budget requests
 - Operational resource allocation decisions
 - Identification of performance issues and corrections required
 - Monitoring the performance of contractors and grantees
 - Ensuring services are delivered efficiently
 - Motivation of personnel to continue program improvements
 - Provision of data for use in scheduled program evaluations
 - Support of strategic and long-term planning processes
- Do the reports move horizontally and vertically?
- Is there a relationship between M&E reports, Annual Reports and Budget Statements?
- Are promising interventions, innovative approaches and lessons learned disseminated?

10. THE FORMAT FOR A MONITORING & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework should ideally cover the following key areas:

1. **Introduction to the Framework:** setting out the constructs and processes used in the formulation of the approach to monitoring and evaluation. Ideally the Introduction should include the functions the Framework intends to serve, its governing principles, the approach adopted to consultation and participation in its development and implementation, the priority of the Framework within its host organisation, funding and organisational capacity for M&E functions.
2. **Program Profile:** This section should establish background and context issues and their impact upon monitoring and evaluation activities. It should include the program aims objectives, the program theory from which they were derived, the needs analyses completed and the status of baseline and stakeholder analyses.
3. **Program Logic:** indicating the intended connections between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Not all Frameworks will use this schema but a similar attempt at mapping logic or theory of change should be available.
4. **The Monitoring Plan:** This usually includes a plan that outlines what is to be monitored and how.
5. **The Evaluation Plan:** This also involves a plan outlining the evaluation questions and approach. It should articulate with and refer to the Monitoring Plan.
6. **Data Collection and Analysis Strategy:** Frameworks should ideally include a strategy for identifying what data is to be collected and how it is to be assimilated and analysed.
7. **Reporting Strategy:** This also involves the articulation of a strategy detailing the approach to and workplan for producing and disseminating monitoring and evaluation results.
8. **Implementation Strategy:** a strategy for identifying how the framework will be put into practice.
9. **Strategy for Learning and Reflection:** A strategy for identifying how the monitoring and evaluation results will be used to inform learning and program refinement.
10. **Data Collection and Reporting Formats:** Ideally the Framework should include pro-formas and data collection tools that have been designed and developed for data collection and reporting.

Glossary of Monitoring & Evaluation Terms

Activity	Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds and other types of resources, are mobilised to produce specific outputs. Activities define ‘what we do’ in our everyday work within a program.
Appropriateness	A measure of whether an intervention is suitable in terms of achieving its desired effect and working in its given context. Suitability may apply, for example, to whether the intervention is of an appropriate type or style to meet the needs of major stakeholder groups.
Assumptions	Hypotheses about factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of an intervention.
Data Collection Tools	Methodologies used to collect information during monitoring and evaluation. Examples are informal and formal surveys, key stakeholder and community interviews, focus groups, expert opinion, case studies.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the appropriateness and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
Formative Evaluation	Evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs
Goal	The higher-order objective to which an intervention is intended to contribute.
Impact	Positive and negative, long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Intermediate to longer term changes related to program activities and outputs, and in fulfilment of the program purpose.
Indicators	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess performance. Ways of measuring (indicating) the changes expected from particular aspects of the program. Tools commonly identified at levels of purpose, outputs, outcomes and impact.
Inputs	The financial, human, and material resources used for the intervention.
Logical framework	Management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the program level. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs and outputs and maybe outcomes and impacts) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of an intervention.
Mid-term evaluation	Evaluation performed towards the middle of the period of implementation of the intervention.
Monitoring	A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.
Objective	Intended result contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other benefits to a society, community, or group of people via one or more interventions.

Outcome	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Immediate to intermediate changes in behaviour or actions related to the effect or influence of the program activities and outputs, and in fulfilment of the program purpose. It includes the identification of unintended or unwanted outcomes.
Outputs	The products, goods and services which result from an intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Participatory monitoring and evaluation	Method in which representatives of agencies and stakeholders work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting a monitoring and evaluation system.
Program Evaluation	Evaluation of a set of interventions that are intended to attain specific national, statewide or sector objectives. Note: A program is a time bound intervention involving multiple activities that may cut across sectors, themes and/or geographic areas.
Project Evaluation	Evaluation of an individual intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules, often within the framework of a broader program.
Purpose	Intended higher level result contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other benefits to a society, community, or group of people via one or more interventions.
Results	The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of an intervention.
Review	An assessment of the performance of an intervention, periodically or on an ad hoc basis. Note: Frequently "evaluation" is used for a more comprehensive and/or more in depth assessment than "review". Reviews tend to emphasise operational aspects. Sometimes the terms "review" and "evaluation" are used as synonyms.
Stakeholders	Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the intervention or its evaluation.
Summative evaluation	A study conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. Summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from an intervention after assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.
Terms of reference	Written document presenting the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the methods to be used, the standard against which performance is to be assessed or analyses are to be conducted, the resources and time allocated, and reporting requirements. Two other expressions sometimes used with the same meaning are "scope of work" and "evaluation mandate".

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http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/155844/NSW_Government_Evaluation_Framework_August_2013.pdf

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Appreciative Enquiry website: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>

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IFAD: *Lessons through Evaluation*, Lessons learned through the evaluations conducted by IFAD – listed by themes and regions. Website:

www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html/eksyst/doc/lle/index.htm

GLOSSARIES OF EVALUATION TERMS

OECD/DAC: Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management, website:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>

UnAID Glossary of Terms in Monitoring and Evaluation

http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/document/2010/11_ME_Glossary_FinalWorkingDraft.pdf

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE WEBSITES

www.mande.co.uk The focus of this website and MandE News is on methods of monitoring and evaluating the progress and outcomes of development aid programs.

www.betterevaluation.org An international collaboration to improve evaluation practice and theory by sharing information about methods and approaches.

www.mymande.org Interactive learning resource to share knowledge on country-led M&E systems worldwide – E Learning based