

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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Monitoring and evaluation are necessary for successful implementation of programmes. The success of a programme depends on scientific formulation, vigorous implementation at field level, close and continuous supervision, monitoring, evaluation and modification of the programme. Monitoring and evaluation are important management functions providing feed back of performance of the job in project implementation.

Monitoring is the process of measuring, recording, collecting, processing and communicating information to assist the process of project management in assessing the progress of project implementation. Monitoring is direct detention and control over the programmes to help future plannings.

Evaluation is a process by which the programme inputs, activities and results are analyzed and judged against explicitly stated norms. It is a method of determining how far an activity has progressed and what more has to be done to attain the objectives regarding project operation and performance and impact with those originally specified planned.

The role of monitoring and evaluation in the project sequence can be traced as follows.

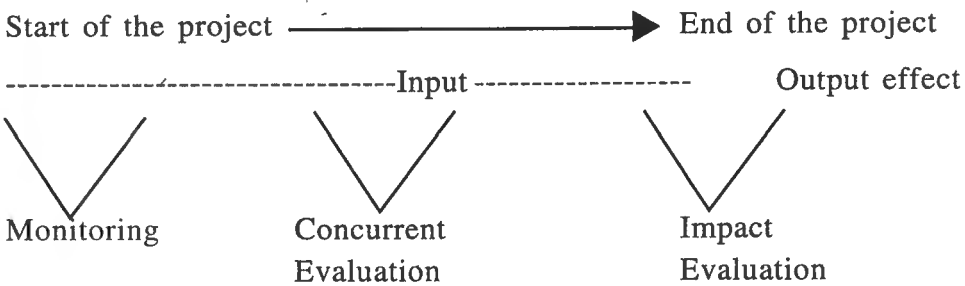
- ◆ Monitoring involved in assessing the impact / output segment of the project sequence.
- ◆ Concurrent evaluation assesses the project progress from output to effect stage;
- ◆ Impact evaluation relates to assessment after the project is over, on the overall benefits to the society as a whole.

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An effective monitoring system is able to

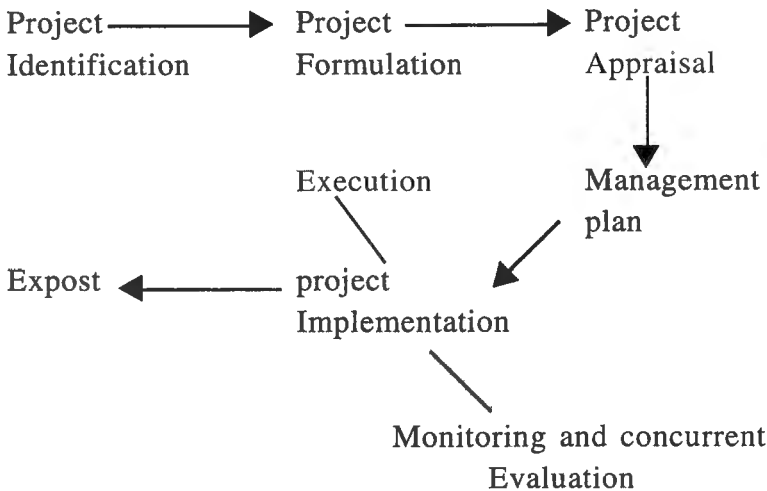
- ◆ Director problems (deviations from schedule, emergence of unforeseen technical problems) early enough for remedies to be applied.
- ◆ Provide realistic, adequately summarized and easily interpreted information on the likely progress of the project, both technical/ social and financial
- ◆ Identify those who failed to do things on time.

Project Monitoring and evaluation stages



Monitoring is a continuous or recurrent process that can be perceived and conducted at three levels. Programme monitoring, evaluation and impact monitoring.

Project cycle:



Programme monitoring is a short-term monitoring of day-to day activities and finance to provide immediate feedback to management for adjusting and time-tuning of activities to ensure that they conform to plans, budgets and objectives.

Joint progress review is an intermediary tool in the project cycle. It attempts to address the missing elements for people's perceptions in the traditional management tools.

Sample format of joint progress review

Date _____

Survey No.	Sub and micro watershed	Activity	Observations	Remarks
—	—	Boulder bund natural terracing broad contour bunds Farm forestry	Activities executed match with treatment plan. Performance satisfactory For better upkeep a minimum of three years maintenance is required	—
		Diversion channel	Planned but not executed due to lack of funds and to be taken as spill over.	Follow up

Signature of Joint progress review committee members.

NGOs	Agricultural Department	Horticultural Department	Forestry Department
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Components of monitoring and evaluation

A. Targets:

Progress targets must be developed, allowing sufficient time for the completion of work. Compare targets with actual achievements to see whether remedial measures are required, either by the project's sponsor or by the aid agency. If targets are unrealistic, there will be continuous misconceptions regarding actual and planned progress. Targets must be feasible and close to being optimal. If targets are quite unrealistic, they may be revised from time to time as the need arises.

B. Channel of Instructions:

The methods by which the targets are communicated to the project supervisors are often unsatisfactory. It must ensure that the supervisors are instructed on their role in a timely and comprehensible manner. Often, no formal provision is made for this and junior staff are expected to decide upon their responsibilities from a circulated generalized over all description of the project.

C. Feedback mechanisms:

A systematic reporting system will facilitate objective identification of reasons for delay and, forms a reliable basis for forecasting future progress. Without proper identification of reasons for delay, it is difficult to devise effective remedies. Timing of a reporting system must be appropriate in relation to the duration of the project cycle to identify delays before they become serious.

Techniques used in monitoring

A. Traditional method:

Periodical reports like monthly reports, quarterly reports etc in prescribed formats. Limitations / deficiencies:

- ⤴ Targets are often unrealistic
- ⤴ Lack of a systematic method of converting targets into instruction at the right time to the right people.
- ⤴ There is no methodical checking of what has to be done, by whom and when certain activities maybe overlooked
- ⤴ Distortion in reporting and delayed communication results in delayed decision making on cross check measures.
- ⤴ Physical progress summary tends to be presented after issues have already arisen because deviations are picked up after they have become serious.

- ⤴ It gives no guidance to the project manager on the relative importance of project activities at any one stage
- ⤴ Provides no logical basis for summarizing the state of progress. It remains as an undigested, unclassified list of everything that has happened. The overall picture is concealed.
- ⤴ Instead of identifying the problems the reports often end up reassigning the blame.

Self Monitoring:

The process by which the community and beneficiaries can participate in monitoring their own progress in development initiatives.

Improved method : critical path method

It involves realistic working methods and rates of implementation to generate a feasible plan and provide a means of implementing it. It consists of the following steps.

Assembly of a complete list of all activities needed to complete the project together with the relationships between them (that is, which job must follow which) and the length of time required to complete them.

- ⤴ Calculation of the time needed to complete the project and the dates on which each job should be commenced and finalized.
- ⤴ Setting up instructional and feedback links between the project manager and executives.

Critical path activities:

Delay in any activities will automatically lengthen the project. The continuous line of activity from the start to finish of the project is known as the critical path. The method of project control depending on this sort of analysis is referred to as the critical path method (CPM). The length of the CPM is the minimum time in which the project can be completed. For easy understanding it is explained by citing following example on yield gaps.

Basic data in CPM on the extension activities of an agricultural assistant.

Activity number	Activity description	Duration	Activities proceeding
1	Mass meeting	Jan (4 weeks)	
2	Selection of groups of farmers	Feb (2 weeks)	1
3	Group meeting of selected farmers	Feb (2 weeks)	2
4	Identification of yield gaps on individual land holdings	Mar-April (6 weeks)	3
5	Understanding farmers perceptions about technologies	*	*
6	Identification of production constraints	*	*
7	Setting goals on yield levels	*	*
8	Preparation of technology plan for land development and crop production	*	*
9	Documentation technology plan	May-Oct (24 weeks)	8
10	Follow up on implementation of technology plan	Nov 92 233ks)	11
11	Collection of yield data	Nov. (2 weeks)	10
12	Group meeting on performance appraisal	Nov (2 2weeks)	11
13	Mass meeting on publicity of performance	Dec (4 weeks)	12

* Need based.

Programme Evaluation Review Technique (PERT)

Moder and Philips (1970) enlist the following key advantages of using PERT.

1. It encourages logical discipline in planning, scheduling and control of projects
2. It encourages more length range and detailed project planning
3. It provides a standard method of documenting and communicating project plans, schedules and time and cost performance.
4. It identifies the most critical elements in the plan, thus focusing management attention on the 10-20 percent of the project that is most containing and procedural changes on overall schedules.

Monitoring the management

In addition to field level implementation, project monitoring should assess the management as well, for the effectiveness of the institutional set up.

Check list for monitoring the management

- ☞ Whether a standard review mechanism has been scheduled.
- ☞ Whether proper training / orientation has been given to extension workers on the extension mechanism.
- ☞ Whether the requirements like teaching materials, audiovisual aids and stationery have been supplied to extension workers.
- ☞ Whether inspection, supervision and guidance are organized with reference to identified steps in the extension approach.
- ☞ Whether the reporting system has been standardized.

Evaluation is normally a once only exercise to determine if a project was carried out efficiently, effectively, within budget and conforming to objectives. It can be midterm, or ex post, and may be used, for example, to decide whether a project should be continued or not and if so, whether and what changes are to be made in design and or management.

Impact Monitoring

Impact monitoring is to determine long term, sustained changes that occur because of intervention, whether or not they are planned. It looks at the result and provides impacts to long range planning and design of future interventions.

Steps in participatory impact monitoring

Preparing the monitoring

Step 1 : Deciding on programmes to be monitored

Step 2 : Identifying impacts of the programmes

Step 3 : Clarifying key and agreeing on the meaning of the impact

Step 4 : Deciding on impacts to be monitored

Reflecting on the background of the impacts

Step 5 : Investigating the relation between project activities and impacts

Step 6 : Investigating the relation between other factors and impacts

Step 7 : Examining existing M & E activities concerning the impacts

Developing indicators

Step 8 : Drafting indicators

Step 9 : Consulting key informants for indicator development

Step 10 : Selecting the most appropriate indicators

Step 11 : Defining survey units and deciding on the sampling procedure

Step 12 : Elaborate questionnaires and other data collection tools

Step 13 : Elaborate data proceeding and data analysis sheets

Step 14 : Pre testing indicators, methods and data analysis

Step 15 : Determining targeted achievements

Measuring

Step 16 : Preparing the impact measurement in the field

Step 17 : Collecting and processing data

Analyzing

Step 18 : Analysing and pre-assessing results

Step 19 : Drawing conclusions in joint reflection with the target groups

Step 20 : Elaborating recommendations for future monitoring of the impact

Techniques used in evaluation

Capital investment appraisal methods such as payback period, rate of return, benefit cost ratios, net present value (NPK), internal rate of return etc., may all be used for economic evaluation. In addition different statistical or econometric method may be used to analyze the data.

Many external and internal evolution studies have been conducted in the field of extension activities by many government agencies, research institutions, voluntary organizations. Various types of evaluation such as Enante, Concurrent, Ex-post factor and Terminal are carried out. It has been seen that the evaluation studies lose sight the purpose for which those are conducted resulting into more problems than solutions. Thus, the evaluation study should strictly be restricted to the parameters already designed. There is a need for imparting trainings to the personnel engaged in evaluation and also making use of modern electronic tools to get evaluation results in time.

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