

WORKING DRAFT

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MEASURING CHANGE:

Experiences from IFAD-funded Projects in Asia

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A. THE ROLE OF M&E IN RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Papers in this section contextualize M&E in the larger framework of results-based management, provide an introduction to some RBM tools used at IFAD and some examples of how RBM has influenced practice.

Results-Based Management in IFAD Projects: An operating framework

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Contributed from: Headquarters

Provides a brief overview of results-based management at IFAD and describes some of key instruments used by IFAD to strengthen the results-oriented approach to project planning and M&E.

Gender Responsive Results-Based Management

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Contributed from: Thailand

Outlines the common obstacles to incorporating gender considerations in early project design and throughout the results-based project lifecycle. Includes brief, practical guidance for developing a gender-sensitive results framework.

Enhancing Results-Based Management through Quality Assurance of Supervision Missions

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Contributed from: Headquarters

Describes an innovative practice to improve the quality and relevance of IFAD project supervision missions. Illustrates how this practice contributes to the results-based approach that guides the portfolio review process.

B. PLANNING FOR M&E: STRATEGIC CHOICES

Articles in this section outline some of the key considerations, methodological choices and practical tools that provide useful guidance when planning for M&E.

Planning for M&E: Practical Considerations, Tips and Tools for IFAD Field Practitioners

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Contributed from: Headquarters

Describes the purpose and process of developing an M&E plan and provides practical guidance on data gathering, including tips and key steps to follow when conducting interviews.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Monitoring and Evaluation

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Contributed from: Headquarters

Summarizes the advantages and limitations of both qualitative and quantitative M&E methods. Describes some of the methods commonly used in IFAD-funded projects and the advantages of combining methods to better measure complex results.

The Logical Framework Approach

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Contributed from: Headquarters

Introduces the logical framework, a key RBM tool used to summarize what a project aims to achieve and how. Describes how the logical framework is developed, what its benefits are and explains in detail how to fill it out and use it.

Specifying Outcomes with the Outcome Target Indicator Plan

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Contributed from: Headquarters

Describes how to use a simple table to more clearly articulate the changes desired at the outcome level. Includes a step-by-step process to specify who will change, what the change will be and how the change will be measured for both outcome statements and indicators.

C. INTEGRATING GENDER CONCERNS AND ENSURING INCLUSIVE M&E

This section includes papers that describe the importance of incorporating a gender lens in project planning and M&E. Papers identify some of the challenges and obstacles facing practitioners and describe some of the strategies and tools used in the field to overcome those challenges.

Gender-Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation

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Contributed from: Thailand

Describes how to engender the M&E process—from planning and implementation to analysis and reporting. Provides questions that can be used to check whether gender concerns have been included in the project logframe, indicators and in common project focus areas.

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Contributed from: Cambodia, RULIP project

Describes the process followed by the RULIP project in Cambodia to redefine their project results chain, logframe and M&E plan after implementation began, in order to capture gender differentiated impacts of the project. Explains how this process guided the choice of M&E tools used to measure project outcomes.

Case-Based Gender Process Monitoring

103

Contributed from: Cambodia, RULIP project

Introduces a story-based, qualitative monitoring scheme used to learn about changes in key gender dimensions of interest to a project and to build gender analysis skills among field staff. Describes the piloting of this method in a project in Cambodia.

Integrating Gender in CHARMP2 Planning and Monitoring

115

Contributed from: Philippines, CHARMP2 project

Describes the planning, development, implementation and early results of the CHARMP2's gender strategy. Provides some examples of the gender targets and indicators and that will be monitored during the project.

D. FIELD-TESTED M&E METHODS AND TOOLS

This section is organized into five subsections covering a wide-range of methodologies. Each includes practitioner write-ups of innovative adaptations, modifications and experiences. Some describe experiences with common methodologies used by IFAD-funded projects in the region, such the Results and Impact Management System and the Annual Outcome Survey, while others describe the development and piloting of unique M&E tools specifically designed to meet a project measurement need. The articles in this section include many creative approaches and inventive solutions for measuring project outcomes and impacts.

- **Results and Impact Management System (RIMS and RIMS+)**

IFAD's Results and Impact Management System 129

Contributed from: Headquarters

Provides an overview of the RIMS system, including background on the survey, an explanation of RIMS standard indicators and how both are related to RIMS' three levels of results. Outlines some of the key steps to follow when using the RIMS system.

Results and Impact Management System Plus (RIMS+): Additional Features for Impact Evaluation 139

Contributed from: Viet Nam

Describes the development and value of RIMS+, an expanded questionnaire integrated into the standard RIMS survey. Explains the contents of the questionnaire and discusses some of the lessons learned by users in Viet Nam.

Streamlining Monitoring and Evaluation Information Gathering Systems 151

Contributed from: Indonesia, READ project

Describes the process of designing a software application for the READ programme used to simplify the gathering, processing, analysis, sharing and reporting of M&E information.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Philippine Development Plan Through the Results Matrices 157

Contributed from: Philippines

Describes a collaborative approach used by the government of the Philippines to create a results framework for its national development plan. Explains how the framework is a foundational step toward integrating a results orientation at the national level and improving M&E of the national development plan.

An Integrated Approach to Project Reporting 165

Contributed from: Indonesia, Nepal, HPVAP project

Explains the process used by the HPVAP project to combine impact indicators from various measurement tools into a single, comprehensive M&E system to measure project interventions. Includes details on the key elements of the project's unified M&E system.

- **Annual Outcome Survey (AOS)**

What is an Annual Outcome Survey

177

Contributed from: Headquarters

Provides a description of IFAD's Annual Outcome Survey methodology and briefly outlines the steps involved in carrying it out.

Paperless Surveys: Using Mobile Phones to Administer the Annual Outcome Survey

183

Contributed from: India, ULIPH project

Introduces an innovative approach for administering AOS using a cellular phone application. Describes the software, benefits of the web-based approach and explains how software development and implementation challenges were addressed.

Annual Outcome Surveys: Assessing Impact and Enhancing Project Implementation

191

Contributed from: Viet Nam, DBRP Ben Tre project

Explains how AOS was adapted for specific project measurement needs so that both households and small and medium-sized enterprises could be surveyed. Summarizes some of the key findings and lessons learned through the use of the survey.

Annual Outcome Surveys: An Effective Tool for Project Management

197

Contributed from: Nepal, LFLP project

Recounts the Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme's experience using AOS to improve project outcome monitoring. Describes how the survey was administered, how stakeholders were involved in the process, how results were disseminated and how programme managers and other stakeholders used the findings.

Practitioners' Views of the Annual Outcome Survey

207

Contributed from: Headquarters

Presents the results of a survey aimed at learning about projects' experiences with and perceptions of the Annual Outcome Survey. Main findings discuss the value added by AOS, and the support, resources and time needed to conduct it. Includes some recommendations on what is needed to strengthen and scale up the use of AOS.

- **Most Significant Change Stories**

Most Significant Change Stories to Capture Achievements and Lessons

217

Contributed from: Headquarters

Provides short description of why and how to use this story-based M&E technique. Describes how it may add value to the project completion reporting process.

Measuring Change Through Stories

223

Contributed from: India, SCAMPIS project

Describes how a project in India used the Most Significant Change technique to complement quantitative findings from the RIMS survey. Explains how the tool was used by the project, including how local youth were involved in story collection and how cases were analyzed.



Piloting Most Significant Change Stories at the Project Completion Report Phase

233

Contributed from: China, SPEAR and SGPRP projects

Describes how two projects in China used Most Significant Change at the project completion stage to complement quantitative findings about project impact. Provides details about the training provided to story collectors and the benefits of using MSC for impact measurement.

• Tools for Specific Measurement Needs

Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool

243

Contributed from: Headquarters

Provides an overview of a survey-based methodology designed to assess ten fundamental dimensions of human well being and rural livelihoods. Describes how the method is designed, how it works, its potential uses, and some important considerations when using it.

Using the Tree of Life Tool for Visioning and Reflection on Project Progress

255

Contributed from: Cambodia

Describes an empowerment tool that was used in Southeast Asia as part of a leadership training programme. Explains key elements of the tool that is used to explore inner power, and promote awareness and leadership among project beneficiaries. Provides some reflections on considerations and uses of the tool at different project stages.

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Survey to Assess Training Impact

263

Contributed from: Headquarters

Introduces a simple, qualitative survey used to assess the uptake of training provided to project beneficiaries. Uses a case study in Bangladesh, to describe the tool, discuss the findings and provide some general recommendations for using this methodology. Provides a summary of the steps involved in carrying out the survey.

Using Case Studies to Expand the Scope and Depth of Standard M&E

275

Contributed from: Viet Nam, 3PAD project

Describes the use of case studies to improve the outcome monitoring of different project components. Describes the case study methodology used by the project, and the challenges, limitations and overall benefits derived by the tool.

Using Key Informant Interview Technique for Collecting Quick Impact Assessment Information

283

Contributed from: Sri Lanka, PTCRRMP project

Explains why the key informant interview technique was selected as a tool for impact assessment in a post-tsunami project context. Summarizes how the interviews were conducted, how informants were selected and what was learned through the process.

Using Functionality Surveys to Assess User Association Performance

289

Contributed from: Philippines, RaFPEP project

Describes a survey designed to learn about the operation and performance of community irrigator associations. Provides an overview of how the tool is administered and describes the key criteria evaluated for each association. Explains how results are used to assess the associations' performance and identify what additional capacity development is needed to strengthen the associations' management capabilities.

M&E at the Microenterprise Level

299

Contributed from: Philippines, RuMEPP project

Summarizes the development and use of a new system to monitor thousands of individual beneficiaries of a rural microenterprise promotion project in order to more accurately measure project impact. Provides details and examples of the monitoring tool and discusses some of the challenges of and solutions for ongoing data gathering.

• Participatory Tools for Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Participatory Impact Assessment

311

Contributed from: Viet Nam, RIDP project

Describes how a project in Viet Nam utilized a participatory impact assessment process on an annual basis to integrate qualitative information in the project M&E system. Provides information on implementation and discusses how results informed the preparation of the annual work plan and budget.

Participatory Peer-Review Technique

317

Contributed from: China, WGPAP project

Describes a project experience using a participatory tool to assess project implementation and progress. Explains how the tool is used, advantages compared to traditional M&E approaches and its use as a platform for knowledge sharing among project stakeholders in different counties.

Piloting Community Perspective Planning

323

Contributed from: India, NERCORMP project

Tells how a large-scale project in India piloted an innovative, participatory project planning technique involving project staff and community members. Describes why the technique was developed, who was involved in the process and what participatory tools were used during its implementation. Explains how the community perspective plan formed a basis for annual project planning and the development of a participatory M&E plan.

Measuring the Organisational Maturity of Self-Help Groups

333

Contributed from: Philippines, NMCIREMP project

Summarizes the development and use of a participatory tool to assess the organizational, financial and managerial maturity of self-help groups in northern Mindanao, Philippines. Provides details on the indicators used in the assessment tool and how data was processed and analyzed by both self-help groups and the project M&E division.

Establishing Village-Based Participatory M&E Teams

343

Contributed from: Philippines, CHARMP2 project

Describes how participatory M&E teams are organized and strengthened in barangays, or villages, in the project area. Explains how the groups are organized and trained and how they carry out and report on field monitoring activities.

Using the Social Assessment Tool to Assess Impact at Household Level

351

Contributed from: Nepal, PAF project

Describes the use of a simple household survey designed to enable members of community organizations to rank their well being and current quality of life. Explains the survey methodology and its contribution assessing significant household changes over time.

Community-Led Documentation and Reporting System

357

Contributed from: India, OTELP project

Explains the use of two tools that enable communities with limited capacity and literacy to engage in project process and implementation monitoring. Describes the tools, their innovative features and ways that their use improved project monitoring, developed community capacities and increased participants' sense of project ownership.

E. TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

Articles in this section are drawn from existing IFAD publications and documents. They provide concrete guidance on the implementation of key M&E methodologies and approaches, such as carrying out focus groups, selecting sampling techniques and gathering data for baseline studies.

Using Focus Group Discussions to Complement Survey Findings

367

Contributed from: Headquarters

Provides an overview of this qualitative method including what it is, key steps in conducting it, capacities needed to carry it out, tips for facilitating effective discussions. Includes brief discussion on data analysis and reporting of results.

How Do We Gather Baseline Data for Impact Evaluation?

375

Contributed from: Headquarters

Describes two types of comparisons that can be used to generate baseline data in order to measure project impact: "before and after" the project and "with or without" the project. Suggests how projects that haven't collected pre-project baseline information can establish a reliable pre-intervention baseline by asking project participants to "recall" data about the pre-project situation.

Key Informant Interviews

379

Contributed from: Headquarters

Describes the Key Informant Interview method, provides basic guidelines about when and how to use it and discusses advantages and limitations of the tool. Provides some suggested frameworks and sample questions related to some common project focus areas.

Sampling Methods for Sample-Based Surveys

387

Contributed from: Headquarters

Explains the purpose of using a sample-based survey and summarizes eight recommended sampling methods. Discusses how to determine the sample size for various surveys including RIMS, RIMS+ and the Annual Outcome Survey.

Using Monitoring and Evaluation to Generate Knowledge

391

Contributed from: Headquarters

Offers an introduction to knowledge management, including broad definitions of information, knowledge and knowledge management. Describes how knowledge sharing, in general, can increase development effectiveness. Provides insight on what, specifically, can be gained by sharing knowledge that is generated through M&E.

F. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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This section includes the complete list and contact information for all of the contributors to this collection.

G. USEFUL INFORMATION RESOURCES

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This section is a rich list of print and online references and resources for further information on M&E practices and methodologies.

Foreword

As part of its commitment to achieving greater and more sustainable impact IFAD has fully embraced a management framework focused on results. This framework, called results-based management, is reshaping the way national and international development institutions use information on results to improve decision-making, assess performance, learn from experience and use resources more efficiently.

Achieving impacts and results is not new at IFAD, but the adoption of results-based management has redirected organisational emphasis from managing by results to managing for results. Now more than ever, IFAD is seeking to respond to the four fundamental RBM questions:

- What results do we wish to achieve?
- What will we do to reach those results?
- How will we know that we have achieved them?
- How will we learn from experience and use that learning to further improve future performance?

These questions are at the heart of project planning, monitoring and evaluation.

As with any new organizational initiative, RBM requires learning, adjustment, systems development and capacity building across the organization. Over the years, several new instruments have been introduced to strengthen results-based M&E in the field. Many of these instruments have now been field-tested, modified, improved and adjusted and new M&E approaches have been developed to better measure results, especially outcomes, of IFAD-funded projects.

Measuring Change: Experiences from IFAD-funded Projects in Asia responds to an urgent need to capture and share knowledge and learning from practice in order to broaden approaches to M&E and enhance overall professional capacity in the region and beyond. By gathering together in one collection a broad range of experiences, it leverages the breadth and diversity of knowledge among practitioners and makes it widely available.

This collection illustrates the innovation, creativity, determination and commitment among IFAD government partners and field staff in implementing RBM into M&E systems. It provides accounts of field experiences with specific M&E tools and methodologies as well as conceptual guidance on M&E implementation.

Measuring Change promotes peer-to-peer learning on successful M&E practices in the Asia and the Pacific Region. It makes M&E knowledge and expertise available to IFAD partners so that they are better able to

navigate challenging M&E issues and thereby feed into performance management, learning processes, operational management and even budget and policy setting.

It is our hope that these efforts will contribute to realizing IFAD's unique mandate of improving rural food security and nutrition, and enabling rural women and men to overcome poverty.

John McIntire

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IFAD

Introduction

Over the past decade, IFAD has introduced a number of instruments to strengthen results-based management (RBM) in IFAD and in programmes and projects that it funds. In support of project planning and M&E, IFAD's Office of Evaluation led the development of IFAD's Guide to Project M&E. It is a modular manual for managing for impact that includes guidance on M&E planning matrixes. More recently, IFAD adopted its Results and Impact Management System (RIMS); and a Results-Based Country Strategic Options Paper to guide the identification and preparation of new projects.

In 2011, the Asia and the Pacific Division (APR) captured some emerging methodologies in an APR M&E/ Knowledge Management Toolkit for Projects, an earlier version of this toolkit. This included methodologies to expand RIMS impact surveys (RIMS+), undertake Annual Outcome Surveys, and apply the logframe in regular project planning exercises using the Results-Based Annual Work Plans and Budgets.

This new compilation, *Measuring Change: Experiences from IFAD-funded Projects in Asia*, furthers APR's efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation by IFAD-funded projects and its partners. It aims to (i) complement IFAD guidance to projects in executing IFAD procedures related to the above-listed RBM processes, and (ii) to share experiences from project M&E practices in the Asia and the Pacific regions. This second version is available in both print and online formats allowing for wider access to the toolkit and the possibility to receive user feedback and comments through the online site (<http://asia.ifad.org/>).

We maintained and improved on the theoretical articles, including more implementation guidelines from IFAD. And, we expanded accounts of project team experiences that illustrate the adaptation of methods and how these have helped projects address their information needs. As with the previous version, contributions came from APR's own staff as well as from government officers and their partners in M&E.

Generating the Content for the Toolkit

In December 2012, contributors participated in a regional RBM Writeshop hosted by the Asian Institute of Technology and supported by the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and IFAD. The majority of articles in this compilation were written and collected at this event. The RBM Writeshop itself used an adaptive approach aimed at managing for rapid results.

Clarity of purpose, frequent reviews and adaptive scheduling at the workshop demonstrated the value of focusing group energies on results while allowing individuals to work independently and bring out their best. It provided an important learning opportunity for project staff, with respect to both content and process. The methodology assisted participants in conceptualising strategies to effectively capture key lessons (in a way that is easy to communicate) and demonstrated the value of peer reviews for efficiently improving knowledge products.

Special thanks are due to Tonya Schuetz and Julian Gonsalves, and the IIRR team for orchestrating the entire event; and Agus Nugroho, Jagriti Shankar and the AIT team for their support to and careful execution of the workshop.

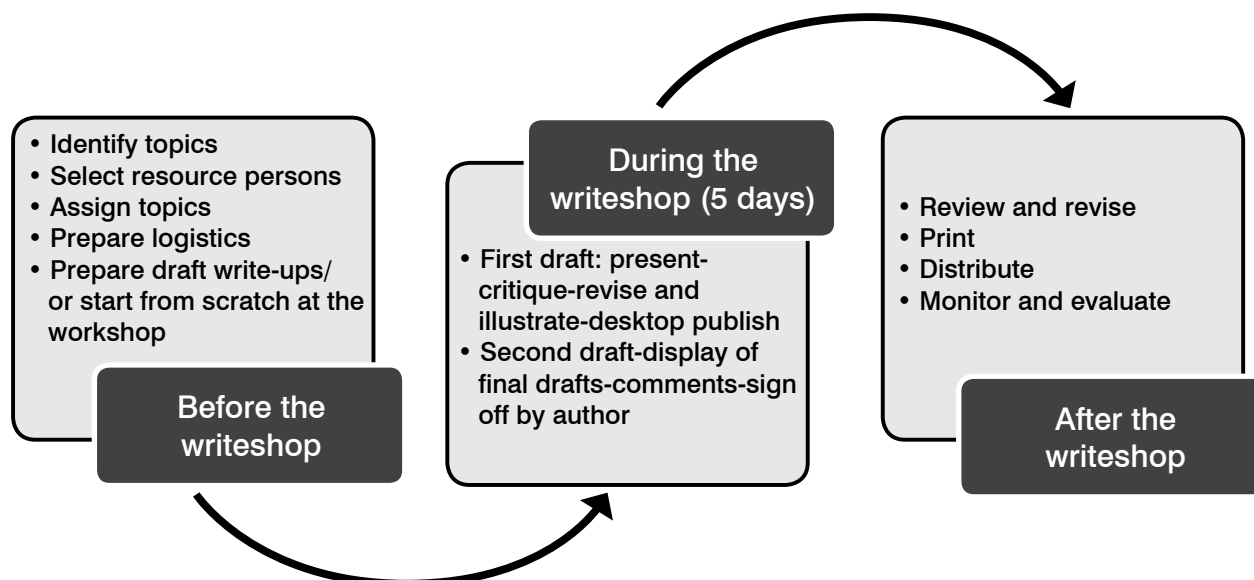


Figure 1: The RBM Workshop in Bangkok, December 2012: Overview of the Process

The articles delivered at the RBM Writeshop form one key pillar of this document. A second pillar includes articles drawn from existing secondary materials available at IFAD. These papers often provide an overview to synthesise valuable concepts and point the reader to additional resource materials through references, web links or documentation. We are grateful for the practical hard work by numerous other teams, too many to list individually, who made these secondary materials available.

The current version of Measuring Change is still a work-in-progress. Two rounds of review and improvement were held following the writeshop, one electronically with the authors and one among the team compiling this collection. We are eager to receive suggestions and feedback that can help improve the collection as well as additional write-ups of emerging practices.

We expect this second edition of the toolkit to be a dynamic learning and sharing mechanism and given the rich experiences in M&E among IFAD-funded projects in Asia, it is envisaged that there may be new editions every 2 years.

We hope that this provides exciting and insightful reading and we are looking forward to any comments, recommendations, feedback and new articles describing additional field-based experiences.

Comments and suggestions may be sent to:

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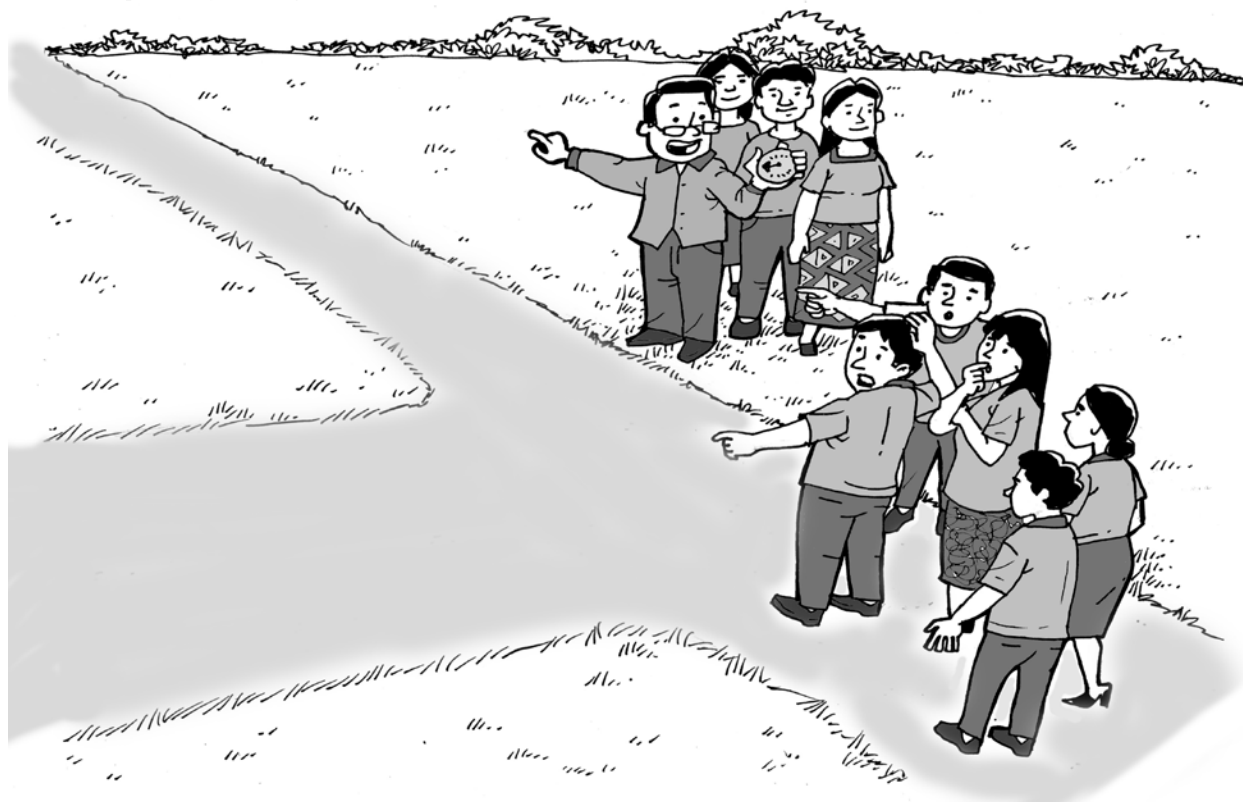
A

THE ROLE OF M&E IN RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT



Results-Based Management in IFAD Projects

An Operating Framework



“Results-based management asks managers to regularly think through the extent to which their implementation activities and outputs have a reasonable probability of attaining the outcomes desired and to make continuous adjustments as needed to ensure that outcomes are achieved.” OECD-DAC,¹

Donors and developing countries alike want to know that aid is being used as effectively as possible, and they want to be able to measure results. The objective is to ensure that development activities lead to tangible and sustained improvements in the lives of people in developing countries.

To this end, IFAD, along with several other United Nations organisations, has fully embraced Management for Development Results—a results-based management strategy for national and international development institutions that focuses on using information on results to improve decision making (see box 1). It provides a framework for assessing performance, learning from experience and using resources more efficiently. At IFAD, MfDR is commonly referred to as results-based management (RBM).

¹ OECD and World Bank, *Emerging good practice in managing for development results. First Issue*, Source Book, 2006. Available online at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/10/36853468.pdf>

Results-based management in the project cycle

Results-based management (RBM) is an adaptive management approach used throughout the project life cycle. It focuses teams on setting medium-and short to medium-term targets, regularly assessing progress and learning from results information with a view to adapting operational plans in a way that maximises achievement of longer term strategic objectives. Enquiry, evidence and learning are key elements of this approach. In its framework document on RBM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that “in results-based management, managers are expected to:

- Understand why the programme and projects are believed to contribute to the outcomes sought—the theory of change;
- Set meaningful performance expectations/targets for key results (outputs and outcomes);
- Measure and analyse results and assess the contribution being made by the programme to the observed outcomes/impact;
- Deliberately learn from this evidence and analysis to adjust delivery and, periodically, modify or confirm programme design; and
- Report on the performance achieved against expectations—outcomes accomplished and the contribution being made by the programme, i.e. what difference it is making.²

The results-chain concept is at the core of RBM, with results being defined by the OECD-DAC as the “outputs, outcomes or impacts (intended or unintended, positive or negative) of a development intervention”. More precisely, following are the OECD-DAC definitions of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact:

At the core of this management approach is the results chain concept. It expresses the cause-and-effect relationships between what a project plans to do and what it wants to achieve.

Results, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), OECD-DAC, are the “outputs, outcomes or impacts (intended or unintended, positive or negative) of a development intervention”. Results at each level of the results chain aggregate to contribute to the results at the next higher level (see table 1).

Traditional management approaches were often focused on costs, activities and deliverables instead of whether there were actually making a difference. Results-based management focuses on what changes are being created by the project and whether the intended results are being achieved.

This is why M&E activities are crucial. Unless project managers have access to reliable data, information and knowledge on project results, it will be highly challenging for them to steer project performance and take corrective action when and if necessary to ensure that project objectives will be met.

Table 1. Results as defined by OECD-DAC.

Results level	Definition and Examples	
Impacts	<p>Positive and negative, long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased production of high-value crops in project area and increased farmers' income Increased agricultural productivity and production 	WHY should we do this?
Outcomes	<p>The likely (or achieved) short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity by small farmers' to grow high-value crops Increased availability of water for irrigation 	WHAT results do we expect to see?
Outputs	<p>The products and services provided by the project to beneficiaries (immediate results).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers trained in the production of high-value crops Irrigation canals newly constructed or repaired 	
Inputs	<p>"Financial, material and human resources used for implementing activities</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical expertise to develop the training course for raising high-value crops Funds and staff coordination for irrigation canal construction 	HOW should this be implemented?

RBM tools in IFAD's Asia and Pacific Division

Over the past decade, IFAD has introduced a number of instruments to strengthen RBM in IFAD and in programmes and projects that it funds. They can be organized into three broad categories:

1. Performance planning tools: project logframe; cost tables; results-oriented annual work plan and budget; country programme results frameworks
2. Performance measurement tools: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tool box (e.g., key informant interviews, focus group discussions)
3. Performance reporting tools: Supervision reports; annual progress reports; mid-term and completion review reports; results and impact management system (RIMS)

Performance planning tools

IFAD programming has been anchored on results-based country strategic options papers (RB-COSOP) that are prepared in close collaboration with borrowing governments. The RB-COSOP sets the framework for approving IFAD-funded projects.

Approved projects develop a logical framework that reflects the project's strategy and results chain. The logframe in turn feeds into results-based annual work plans and budgets (AWPB), whose results hierarchy mirrors that of project logframes. Some projects in Asia have also applied the outcome target indicator plan (OTIP) to better specify their logframe objective hierarchy.

Performance measurement tools

In support of project planning and M&E, IFAD's Office of Evaluation led the development of IFAD's Guide to Project M&E, a modular manual for managing for impact that includes guidance on M&E planning matrixes and tools; key information needs for monitoring progress against target outcomes and milestones; and resourced M&E plans with detailed actions and responsibilities for M&E deliverables. IFAD's Asia Division has also developed an M&E/knowledge management toolkit to assist projects in executing surveys as well as qualitative measurements of project outcomes.

All IFAD-funded projects also apply the results and impact management system (RIMS) linked to the RB-COSOP results framework. RIMS requires projects to (i) survey project target groups at baseline and completion to measure impact indicators associated with those Millennium Development Goals most relevant to IFAD's mandate; and (ii) select relevant outcome and output indicators from a menu of indicators with standardised and consistent formats.

Because RIMS impact surveys are administered at the end of the project, changes to the intervention could only be made in a subsequent project. In addition, the RIMS surveys measure only the impact (long-term effects) of the intervention. To solve this, IFAD has introduced the annual outcome survey (AOS) that can be administered annually to measure an intervention's outcomes. Based on the survey results, corrections to the project and tracking can be made.

Performance reporting tools

Projects need effective information management systems that provide continuous and frequent reports, giving supporting evidence of (or lack of) progress. Project teams should monitor the project's progress and formally report on specific project achievements and failures.

IFAD-funded projects are required to submit to IFAD periodic progress reports. Annually, an IFAD supervision visit documents project progress and concludes with detailed scoring of various elements of project implementation. These project status report scores are reviewed and validated by IFAD headquarters. In some projects, IFAD supervision missions are informed by annual outcome surveys (AOS) undertaken through the project or project partners. Finally, a project completion report is prepared at project end or soon thereafter and validated by IFAD's independent Office of Evaluation. An internal annual portfolio review is conducted each year by IFAD management to review the performance of each division's set of projects.

Supporting performance management

IFAD's collection of RBM tools is designed to work together to enhance performance management. Project managers need to be in a position to make informed management decisions that steer the project in the right direction and ensure that expected results are achieved. For this to happen, the focus needs to be on the regular collection, analysis and evaluation of information on results. The following are two examples that demonstrate how RBM tools work together to enable improved performance management.

The RB-COSOP and RIMS

IFAD introduced its RB-COSOP approach as part of its commitment to establish results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks aligned to national development targets. These frameworks aim to track a number of indicators that help monitor progress against national development targets in partner countries.

Measuring progress towards strategic objectives supports learning processes both in-country and at IFAD and can provide evidence to decision makers, policy-setters and funding agencies to leverage support for scaling up of successful development interventions.

The RB-COSOP's tabular results framework illustrates the connection between national targets (and a quantified baseline situation depicting the status of the rural poor), IFAD's strategic objectives and milestones and risks in achieving quantified outcome objectives—all founded on investments in productive or financial outputs.

IFAD's RIMS supports the measurement of these outcome objectives with standardised indicators and methods for measuring impact. The standardised RIMS indicators are particularly beneficial at the country programme level as indicators can be aggregated or disaggregated not only sectorally or project versus regional portfolio but also spatially in a way that can fulfill information needs of territorial administrations specifically relevant to their areas of jurisdiction.

While RIMS may not be tuned to address performance questions specifically or to review critical path activities, it can be utilised as an instrument for tracking the pace of progress against established annual and global targets and to assess improvement in target group living standards at project completion.

The logframe, annual work plan and budget and the use of milestones

Results management strategies are built around the impact pathways (or theory of change) described in projects' results chain and in the project logframe. Impacts, outcomes and outputs have specific indicators that aim to measure results and ensure the programme remains on track.

The detailed sets of outputs included in the logframe provide the foundation for annual/monthly work planning. An effective work plan and budget specifies (i) schedules and time plans for delivery; (ii) budget resources needed; (iii) a personnel plan with responsibilities, staff needs, and staff training and (iv) a material and equipment plan for items to be procured. Monitoring formats are provided below for (i) planning and monitoring targeted outcomes (with examples), (ii) setting and reporting on milestone measures and (iii) planning outputs and activities for AWPB.

Project annual work planning is a key element of RBM within IFAD projects. It aids management in identifying the most efficient method of implementing a project; establishing needed resource levels and securing its human and financial resource requirements; procuring inputs; employing qualified contractors at the appropriate time and executing the project within the estimated cost and time constraints.

However, the achievement of outputs does not automatically translate into the expected outcomes or impact. This is because externalities may prevent an expected outcome from being achieved. Because the achievement of rural development project objectives relies on the behavioural and organisational change of project stakeholders (including targeted households, local governments, rural businesses, service providers and other public and private actors), it is critical for projects to monitor these changes and verify whether targeted social outcomes are realised as a result of project activities.

This demonstrates the importance of tracking achievement of outcomes with milestones, especially since programme management teams rarely have full control of finances, human resources and policies, and are not self-sufficient. Plans for activity durations and resource utilisation may therefore be underestimated and programmes sometimes find that necessary resources (especially specialized human resources, but also finances, equipment and materials) are unavailable when or where they are needed. Other factors that may set back delivery are unanticipated conditions (such as climatic conditions, technical and physical complexities related to remote programme locations, etc.), as well as delivery delays by suppliers and service providers.

Milestones provide project teams with well-defined, shorter-term goals and deliverables that are tangible in the immediate time-span (and against which incremental successes can be registered) rather than the broader, long-term targets set for the project's entire duration. Breaking long and medium-term targets into periodic (shorter term) milestones within a results chain also serve the project team and its partners in visualising how immediate actions fit holistically and feed into the overall programme strategy and direction. Learning and management processes also require clear milestones and reporting tools to assist in correctly assessing progress and communicating incremental successes and constraints.

Conclusion

Results-based management is a framework of concepts, principles and tools that provide IFAD and the projects it funds with a comprehensive approach to improve performance in order to achieve predetermined results.

IFAD's collection of RBM tools is meant to work in combination so that a results-based approach is applied throughout the project lifecycle. It is extremely valuable to share experiences of these tools, both within and across regions, to better understand how they are being used to support performance planning, measurement and reporting.

Feedback on the tools helps IFAD improve or modify them, as with RIMS and RIMS+, to increase their utility in a variety of project contexts. New tools, like the outcome target indicator plan and the annual outcome survey have been introduced and are being field-tested. This essential feedback loop of action and reflection deepens our experience and capacity to implement results-based management and improve development effectiveness.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	annual outcome survey
AWPB	annual work plan and budget
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MfDR	Management for Development Results (called results-based management at IFAD)

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OTIP	outcome target indicator plan
RB-COSOP	results-based country strategic options papers
RBM	results-based management
RIMS	results and impact management system
RIMS+	results and impact management system plus
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Bio-sketch and contact details

Tawfiq El-Zabri, an economist by training, worked at the World Bank and IMF before joining IFAD in 2000. At IFAD, Tawfiq worked as country programme manager for a number of countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the horn of Africa, as well as regional grant manager for capacity building initiatives. In 2011, he joined the Asia and the Pacific Regional Division as programme officer with focus on results-based management.

Gender-Responsive Results-Based Management



Results-based management (RBM) is defined as a management strategy by which all development actors on the ground ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results of outputs, outcomes and goals. RBM rests on clearly defined accountability for results and requires monitoring and self-assessment of progress towards results, including reporting on performance (UNDG, 2009).

Gender refers to socially defined roles, responsibilities, rights and power structures associated with women and men. Gender roles and relations define much of life's opportunities for women and men. However, gender roles and relations are not static, but rather change over time and are context-specific. The needs of women and men are often not the same, and women and men face diverse situations and constraints. Various development interventions affect women and men differently, and women and men perceive project interventions differently because of their unique priorities.

Why is gender often missing from M&E systems?

Gender is often missing from project designs due to a lack of understanding of the importance of gender at higher levels in the organisational hierarchy; lack of participation by women in project design; poorly conducted needs analyses; lack of baseline data on key gender differences relevant to the specific project and failure to address gender issues in project objectives. Even when gender is emphasised at the project design stage, it might be de-emphasised in the routine of project implementation. Day-to-day project activities usually focus on project results rather than cross-cutting issues, such as gender or knowledge management.

When donors, project designers, project management or other key project-related stakeholders at the leadership arena are gender-blind, they may not value the contribution that gender equality might make in achieving project results. If a gender agenda or gender-sensitive indicators are absent from project design and the project logframe, gender-based problems will not be addressed in the course of project implementation.

During the project life cycle, monitoring of project activities and evaluation of project impact receive less than the desired attention as attention gets diverted to the implementation of activities. Sometimes, project monitoring is conducted only because it is required by donors, and, if donors do not insist on gender-disaggregated data, projects usually will not collect it. Often, staff give insufficient attention to gender simply because they lack knowledge on how to include gender elements into project management: staff are not trained in gender mainstreaming in project activities, collecting gender-sensitive data or interviewing women in order to record their opinions. Often, women are not present in meetings or are not confident enough to speak in mixed groups or do not speak the language of enumerators. As a result, the voices of women are neither heard nor their views recorded.

Gender-integrated RBM

- Has a gender equality vision and ensures that gender-sensitive results are achieved
- Has a positive impact on women by improving their access to development benefits
- Addresses the desired outcomes based on the different needs and constraints of women and men
- Addresses gender differences in vulnerability and external pressures on women and men
- Identifies opportunities to empower women by improving their confidence, self esteem as well as leadership and organisation capacity
- Identifies the trends that lead to women's empowerment and replicate them in programmes
- Ensures that gender-related activities are not fragmented and that all activities are aimed towards the overarching goal of promoting gender equity
- Involves women's advocates and groups in planning and monitoring, at both local and national levels, to ensure that women's issues are addressed in the programmes
- Ensures evaluation of gender agendas in internal and external project evaluation

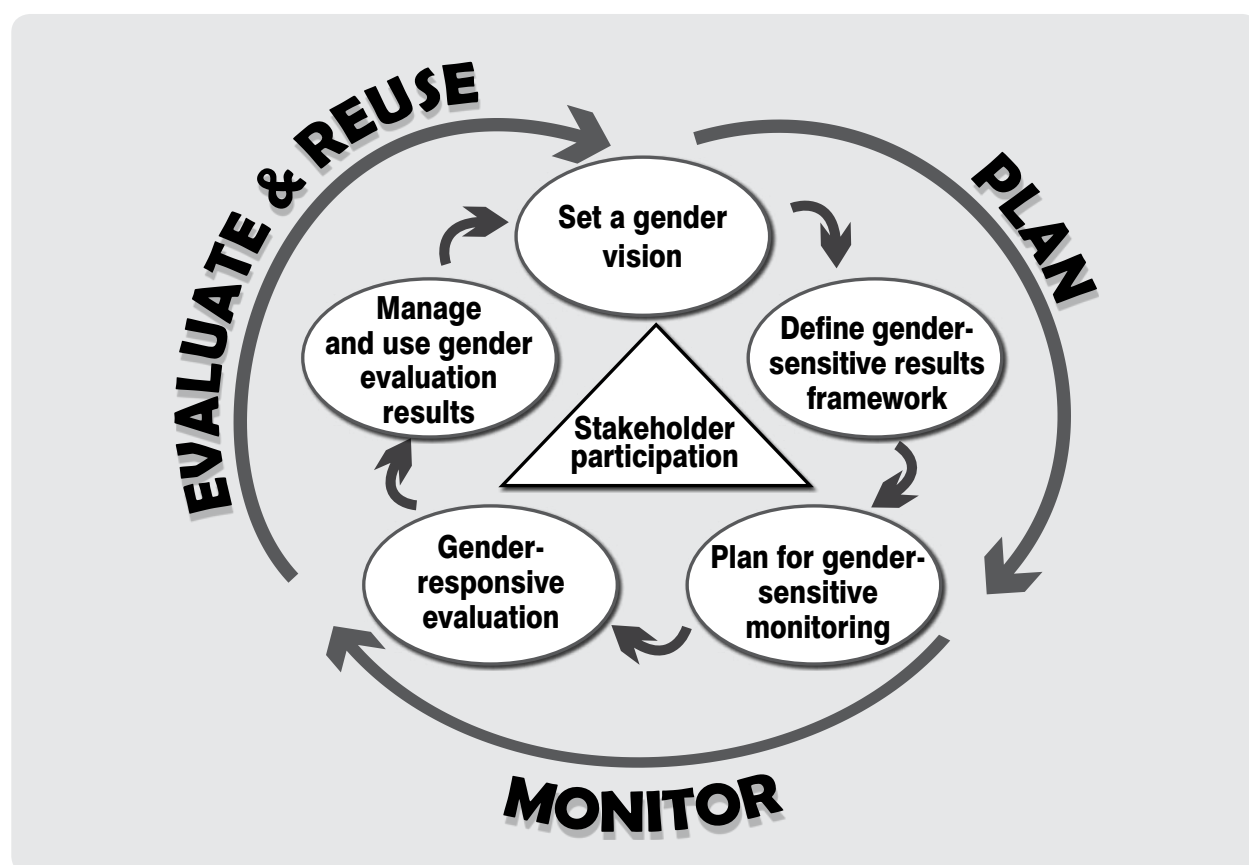
The gender-responsive RBM life cycle

RBM is seen as a life cycle approach, starting with elements of planning, such as setting the vision and defining the results framework, as seen in Figure 1. Once there is agreement on the desired results, implementation starts, with monitoring as an essential component. M&E provides valuable information for decisionmaking, providing lessons learned for future action (UNDG, 2010).

A gender-responsive RBM ensures that there is a clear vision regarding the desired gender-sensitive impacts. This vision helps define a gender-responsive results framework (outputs, outcome and goals). It also guides the integration of gender into projects with gender-sensitive planning, implementation and M&E.

A gender-sensitive project guided by gender-responsive RBM brings equal benefits to women and men. It ensures that the different needs of men and women are efficiently addressed, achieving the set objectives for men and for women. At the same time, it also reveals the different experiences of men and women as well as the different impacts of intervention measures.

Figure 1. Gender-sensitive RBM (UNDP 2009).



Ensuring gender-sensitivity: a checklist for effective RBM

The following checklist can help in the drafting of a gender-sensitive results-based framework:

- Is there a clear gender vision in the organisation and a clear gender objective of the project?
- Is the project's result framework gender-sensitive—i.e., does the project have clearly defined gender-sensitive outcomes, impacts and goals?
- Have the project's gender-sensitive goals been communicated to all stakeholders?
- Are gender-disaggregated baseline data available?
- Has the project included gender-specific objectives and indicators (e.g., violence against women), regardless of the main objective of project (agriculture, forestry, natural resource management, etc.)?
- Has the project developed operational procedures, manuals, guidelines and training for the staff and enumerators in the use of M&E methods and tools for gathering gender-disaggregated data?
- Are both quantitative and qualitative data being collected?
- If disparity in impact along gender lines is discovered in the course of project implementation, are there mechanisms in place to analyse the causes and adjust the activities in order to ensure equal benefits to both women and men?
- Are participatory monitoring methods implemented and are there separate group discussions for women and men?
- Are women's and men's groups consulted in the course of project evaluation?
- Are RIMS, RIMS+ indicators and surveys gender-sensitive?
- Does the terms of reference of the mid-term review ensure participation of a gender consultant?

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Acronyms and abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
RBM	Results-based management
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RIMS+	Results and Impact Management System Plus
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Bio-sketch and contact details

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Ms. Jagriti Shankar is working as a 'gender and knowledge management officer' with the IFAD-funded Asian Project Management Support Program-Gender Sensitive Management Project, under Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. She has been working with regional and international donor organisations for development projects related to gender, agriculture, poverty alleviation, Millennium Development Goals, etc. She has interest and experience in mainstreaming gender into development projects, gender-sensitising M&E systems, capacity building in gender and knowledge management areas, etc.

Enhancing Results-Based Management through Quality Assurance of Supervision Missions



Supervision in the context of Management for Development Results

The concepts of Management for Development Results are most widely understood as they apply to project-, programme- and country-level management: ensuring that development activities lead to tangible and sustained improvements in the lives of people in developing countries.

But IFAD also recognizes that implementing this management strategy is as essential at the organizational level as it is at the project level. Its framework can be applied to project interventions and institutional performance alike in order to assess performance, learn from experience and use resources more efficiently.

Indeed, IFAD's *internal performance* plays a large role in the organisation's achievement of results at the country level. For this reason, IFAD has made a strong commitment to strengthening the monitoring and management of its resources, internal processes and policies. The organisation has identified a set of corporate management results to work toward in order to achieve its strategic objectives. Among these are better supervision and implementation support—which help to strengthen the relevance, focus, quality and efficiency of country programmes financed by IFAD.

Though supervision and implementation support are strongly linked, they are generally carried out separately: first, a supervision mission will be conducted, then the findings from supervision inform the kinds of implementation support needed at the project level. This paper provides an overview of a promising practice in the supervision process that has been developed and implemented by IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division (APR) and illustrates how it contributes to the division's overall commitment to accountability and results.

IFAD's supervision process—an overview

Supervision is normally carried out on an annual basis for every IFAD-funded project. Mid-term review missions (where elements of project design can be re-visited more formally, jointly with government) follow a similar process and are carried out once at the mid-point of a project. Supervision is mainly carried out directly by IFAD and often includes the participation of headquarters staff and contracted service providers and consultants, including reputable international/regional/national institutions and local partners. For some projects, supervision is carried out by cooperating institutions rather than directly by IFAD. The approach taken in any given country is based on an assessment of the national implementation capacity and the size of the country programme.

The main purposes of a supervision mission are to review and assess

- a. fiduciary aspects of the project,
- b. project implementation progress,
- c. implementation and achievement of outputs and outcomes by components, and
- d. project sustainability and impact.

During the supervision field mission, information pertaining to these four assessment areas is gathered from beneficiaries, the project team, government officials and other stakeholders and later reflected in the project status report (PSR) and the aide-memoire.

The aide-memoire is a key document resulting from the supervision mission. It summarises the findings of the mission, itemising those issues on which agreement was reached, those that remain to be resolved and any recommendations for project improvement. This document forms the basis for the final wrap-up meeting with lead ministries and project management during which the findings and actions agreed to are discussed and the aide-memoire signed. If changes to the aide-memoire are required, they are made, and a conformed aide-memoire is drawn up and signed. This would then be considered the final document.

Upon their immediate return to IFAD, the country project manager (CPM) or supervision mission leader, submits the conformed aide-memoire as part of the back-to-office report, detailing any contextual considerations

that were not included in the aide-memoire itself, but that the CPM wishes to bring to the attention of IFAD management. The final supervision report is composed of the conformed aide-memoire plus a set of standard appendices (with additional quantitative and qualitative information), and any technical reviews prepared by the mission. These appendices include the PSR that scores progress and performance of various aspects of the project implementation (see Appendix 1). Scores are allocated according to standard score definitions applicable for all IFAD supervisions. These scores are used as one determinant within IFAD's performance-based allocation system, which allocates shares of IFAD funding any single country programme may receive within distinct 3-year cycles.

Within 10 working days of the completion of the supervision mission, the CPM draws up another document called the 'management letter'¹. It includes critical issues that are reflected in the aide-memoire and that require special attention from the minister or head of the government's lead implementing agency. In addition, the management letter may be used to raise sensitive issues that could not be addressed in the aide-memoire. The management letter is reviewed and signed by the division director then sent, along with the aide-memoire, to key implementing agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), cofinanciers, collaborating bilateral and multilateral agencies and other stakeholders in the project. At this point, the supervision exercise is concluded.

Innovative practices for supervision missions— towards a uniform standard of evaluation and quality assurance

The APR at IFAD follows the same supervision process outlined above with an additional procedure: an internal quality assurance process to review the overall quality of the supervision mission. This process was initiated for three main reasons. First, the division wanted to monitor the quality of the supervision mission itself regarding the process, level of collaboration and consultation with stakeholders and the overall impact of the mission. Second, to assess whether the supervision mission report and the PSR² are in alignment and to adjust them if necessary. Finally, the process aims at validating the scores on the PSR to ensure that they are robust and consistent with the findings of the mission as well as with similar performance scoring across projects.

The supervision mission quality assurance process is one of the ways the APR is contributing to the organisational commitment to results-based management. On one hand, supervision missions are intended to assess project implementation but their results also provide important inputs for organisational learning, knowledge management, and portfolio assessment. The PSR scores are used to calculate the overall performance of each country programme, and thereby effect the final allocations of funding to country programmes, within the performance-based allocation system mentioned above.

At an organisational level, the quality of supervision and implementation support provided to projects is reviewed annually as a part of the divisional portfolio reviews and the overall corporate portfolio review. These reviews aim to take stock of the performance of the regional and corporate portfolio of projects, and to identify systemic issues and challenges in implementation. The portfolio reviews help define action plans to improve

¹ In APR, it is recommended that the concluding section of the aide memoire is developed as the main content of the management letter.

² The PSR is an integral part of the supervision report that scores progress and performance of various aspects of the project implementation—see Appendix 1. Scores are allocated according to standard score definitions applicable to all IFAD supervisions.

portfolio performance, thereby feeding into IFAD planning processes. Both the allocation of budget resources as well as the fine-tuning of IFAD internal processes and assignments is informed by this review.

The APR has developed and pioneered a division-level process to ensure that the supervision responsibilities are being carried out at a high level of quality—a process that underpins the organisational-level commitment to high-quality supervision and that scores are of significant rigor and robustness to inform portfolio-management decisions and country programme allocations.

How it works—APR's quality assurance process

The APR quality assurance process begins when the supervision mission is completed and the CPM returns to headquarters.

1. Feedback from the Project Management Unit

The first step involves getting feedback, via a survey, from the Project Management Unit (PMU) on how they rate various aspects of the supervision mission. The PMU, composed of the project director, team leader and consultants, is asked to answer questions in three key areas:

- *Mission process and logistics*—assessing the extent to which decisions about the timing, terms of reference development and scheduling of the mission were discussed and agreed upon with the PMU and stakeholders.
- *Consultation process during the mission*—assessing whether there was adequate time in the field and consultation with beneficiaries, seek opinion of the technical capacities of consultants and check on the process followed for the development of the aide-memoire.
- *Mission utility and impact*—assessing whether key issues were addressed and resolved during the mission, how this mission compares with past missions with regard to efficiency, effectiveness and consistency and what improvements could be made to improve the mission overall.

The survey sent to the team leader and to each of the consultants is more focused on the mission's own performance and on the capacity of the mission team to interact, inter alia with partners, stakeholders etc. This survey serves to ensure that lessons are learned and that supervision experiences are regularly reviewed and improved.

2. Independent review by an experienced consultant

The next step is an independent review of all supervision documents and the survey from the PMU. The independent review is conducted by a highly experienced consultant who assigns his own ratings to the project. His ratings are based on discussions with the CPM about the outcomes of the mission, the status of the project and the lessons learned and innovations identified during the mission. For this purpose, the consultant conducts an extensive review of all supervision documents, including the PSR, the management letter, PMU Feedback and any other related documents. This independent review establishes a standard of quality for each supervision (and mid-term review) report, thereby making it possible to compare supervision results from different projects. In addition to these core tasks, the consultant assists in the documentation of best practices, and the cross-fertilisation of best practices between country teams. The consultant also documents key substantive learning from the supervision process that encourages continuous improvement in supervision missions and feeds into better practices in project design or implementation.

3. Division-wide discussions

Once the consultant has completed his review, he prepares a set of draft minutes which act as an agenda for the Peer Debriefing Meeting. A series of meetings are organized at the headquarters to discuss and finalize the supervision documents. Normally, as peer review and for cross-fertilisation purposes, a CPM who is not involved in this particular supervision mission acts as the chair of the discussions. This role is rotated among CPMs within the division.

Colleagues from within the division and from other divisions and departments (for example, from the Controller's and Financial Services Division, and the Office of the General Counsel) are invited to participate in these meetings. Prior to the first meeting, those who will attend are given the preliminary report prepared by the consultant, which includes his summary of lessons learned and his validation scores of the PSR. This document is used as the basis for the final quality assurance meeting.

During the quality assurance meeting, the chair is invited to approve the PSR and to take minutes of the discussion. Much of the discussion aims at soliciting opinions and comments from colleagues on the lessons learned and systemic issues raised at the meeting and on the PSR ratings—with special emphasis on how well the report reflects the real situation and whether the ratings and lessons match the narrative of the supervision report.

Based on these discussions, the CPM might be required to revise the supervision mission report (or the mid-term review report) after the debriefing meeting. In the rare event that there are material changes to be made to the conformed aide-memoire as a result of the quality assurance process, the implementing government would need to be informed.

This quality assurance process is completed within a month of return from the supervision mission, at which time the conformed aide-memoire with appendices from the quality assurance process and the management letter are sent to the government and lead implementing agency.

Key lessons and innovations documented within the supervision report are shared more broadly with the general public via the IFAD ASIA portal, where registered users can access and share information or engage in thematic discussions.

Significant results of the quality assurance process

One of the important results of this process has been its impact on the portfolio review process. The portfolio review process is the main management tool used by IFAD's Programme Management Department and Senior Management to monitor and self-assess the performance of each division's portfolio. This includes measuring outputs; assessing efficiency, effectiveness and impact; identifying problems and appropriate solutions; mitigating deteriorating trends; and drawing lessons from experience. The rigorous reviews and robust scoring ensure that the supervision exercises that inform these self-assessments are objective and verifiable.

The portfolio review process is designed to integrate information from a variety of sources and provides for a systematic review at various levels—project, country programme, regional and corporate. It is an integral part of monitoring the organisational “results chain”. The aide-memoires and PSR are some of the key sources

considered in this review. Because APR's quality assurance process lends transparency to its portfolio rating, it is now being replicated in other IFAD regional divisions, leading to a more rigorous, consistent and transparent quality assurance process within the organisation.

References

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Project supervision in IFAD: www.ifad.org/operations/projects/supervision

Acronyms and abbreviations

APR	Asia and the Pacific Division
CPM	country project manager
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSR	Project status report

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Angela Orlando compiled this article based on IFAD and APR documentation. Mehry Ismaili as co-author.

Bio-sketches and contact details

Angela Orlando has 17 years' experience in the U.S. non-profit and community development sectors with a strong focus on women in poverty. She has a range of project experience, including direct service; project development and coordination; and teaching, training and facilitation. Over the last 10 years, her work has focused on writing, editing and developing educational materials for both international and domestic NGOs. She can be reached by email at aorlando68@gmail.com.

Ms. Mehry Ismaili works in IFAD as Assistant to the Director and also with the Portfolio Adviser. She has an extensive knowledge of the organisation with more than two decades of experience in IFAD. Prior to her joining the Asia and the Pacific Division, Ms. Ismaili worked for the records management and research unit under the Communication Division. She can be reached at m.ismaili@ifad.org.

B

PLANNING FOR M&E: STRATEGIC CHOICES



Planning for M&E

Practical Considerations, Tips & Tools for IFAD Field Practitioners



Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) relies on the proper functioning of the overall M&E system, which typically includes: an enabling organizational structure, human capacity, a learning culture, an information management system and a monitoring and evaluation plan (see Box 1).

While each of these is important, the development of a documented plan is what provides the conceptual and, above all, the practical basis for planning monitoring and evaluation activities within a project. An operational plan is critical for keeping track of M&E activities and resources.

Box 1. Elements of the M&E System

Organisational structure: The location of the M&E functions in the organisation and the support and incentives provided for its effective functioning ultimately demonstrate commitment and determine the extent it can leverage decision making towards higher achievement of results.

Human capacity: The collection and assessment of data require support to local partners in order to enable them to appreciate and utilize the M&E systems for their benefit.

Learning culture: A learning culture supports the communication of experiences, sharing of knowledge and lessons learned and using information and analysis to make good decisions on policy challenges, successes or opportunities.

Information management system: This includes computers, databases and quality control ensure that data are stored securely, are accessible and ensure data sharing with partners.

The monitoring and evaluation plan: The M&E plan is aligned to logframe indicators. It includes key questions, indicators, data collection and analysis methods, dissemination, and financial resources.

The M&E plan matrix

The M&E matrix below (Table 1) is useful for clearly identifying what data are needed, the source of data, how often they will be collected, by whom they will be collected, what methods will be used in collection, and finally, in which reports and forums the data will be presented. The matrix is critical for establishing clear roles and responsibilities of the project and partners and ensuring that the data required to measure project indicators are collected, analysed and used.

Table 1. The M&E matrix.

Logframe element	Indicators	Use of Information			Baseline Measurement			Ongoing Measurement			
		Audience	Reporting Format	Delivery Mechanism	Requirements	Status	Responsibilities	Data Source	Collection Method	Frequency & Cost of collection	Who will collect & analyse
Goal											
Development Objective											
Outcomes											
Outputs											

Table 2, below, illustrates the process to be undertaken in completing the matrix. In some cases, it is simply a matter of copying information that is available in the project logical framework or the more detailed outcome target indicator plan. In other cases, some research, discussion and agreement with key stakeholders may need to be undertaken prior to inserting the information.

Table 2. Stages in preparing the M&E matrix.

Stage	Information to be included in each column of the matrix
1. Logframe element	Enter in Column 1 the main statements contained in the logical framework for Goal, Development Objective, Outcomes, Outputs and, if monitored, Assumptions.
2. Indicators	Enter in Column 2 the main indicators. For Impact, Outcome and Outputs, the indicators contained in the operation logical framework should be inserted. The indicators must be specific, measurable, accurate, realistic and timely. Indicators may need to be developed and added at this stage, in the case of the main assumptions.
3. Use of Information	<p>The Use of Information columns are used to describe important considerations for an M&E reporting and communication strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO needs or wants M&E information • HOW to best communicate this information • WHAT events or opportunities you have to report on results
4. Audience	M&E-related findings have many potential audiences: funding agencies, cooperating institutions, implementing partners, project staff, and primary stakeholders. Audience information needs should drive decisions about what information is actually collected.
5. Reporting format	Consider what reporting format is most suited to each audience. Donors, partners and government officials may prefer formal reports like mid-year and annual progress reports, a mid-term review and a completion report. But, primary stakeholders, for example, may be better informed of M&E progress through regular newsletters or bulletins or through verbal means.
6. Delivery mechanism and timing	List opportunities to communicate M&E results, for example, during forums, supervision missions, quarterly management meetings, field visits, review workshops, and other events. The delivery mechanism may also refer to other modes of communication, such as the radio or a public education campaign. The event and its timing should be indicated in this column.

Stage	Information to be included in each column of the matrix
7. Baseline requirements	Decide what kind of comparison needs to be made to measure change (e.g., before/after programme; with/without programme, control group, etc.) and enter in Column 3 what base case information is needed for this comparison.
8. Status	Enter in Column 4 the status of the information—does it exist in secondary sources? Does it need to be collected? When will it be available?
9. Responsibilities	Enter in Column 5 who will be responsible for collecting the baseline information.
10. Data source	Enter in Column 6 the source of future data—the primary or secondary data source that will provide information about each indicator (e.g., statistics or records; programme accounts; nutrition survey; etc.).
11. Collection method	Enter in Column 9 how the data are being collected (for example, surveys or focus group meetings) and which forms will be used.
12. Frequency of collection and cost	Enter in Column 7 the frequency of collection and costs related to each indicator listed in Column 3. Specify how often primary data will be collected or secondary data analysed (e.g., quarterly, annually, at end of phase, etc.), and the budget required for each stage.
13. Responsibility for collection and analysis	Enter in Column 8 the organisation or unit or individual responsible for collecting and/or analysing the data.
14. Review	Review draft matrix with key stakeholders and revise it. Ensure that indicators can be measured at reasonable cost by existing means or by procedures to be developed by the project. Ensure that responsibilities are clearly assigned. Check that output indicators are derived from management recordkeeping and internal analysis.

Considerations for data gathering

Implementing the M&E plan will require the collection of different kinds of data. There are many options. Some data may already exist as secondary sources, such as government statistics, and other data will need to be collected directly from project beneficiaries and stakeholders. Among the many considerations to weigh when choosing methods for data collection is what type of methodology to use.

Quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering data

Quantitative methods help to answer questions such as who, how much and how many. Quantitative research uses methods adopted from the physical sciences that are designed to ensure objectivity, reliability and the ability to generalise. They seek to exert maximum control over the questions and potential answers and most often incorporate probability sampling methods to allow for statistical inference to the larger study population. The researcher is considered external to the actual research, and results are expected to be replicable no matter who conducts the research.

Quantitative methods are useful in the following situations:

- When 'accurate' and 'precise' data are required;
- When sample estimates will be used to infer something about the larger population with the support of statistical theory;
- To test whether there is a statistical relationship between variables;
- To produce evidence to prove that a particular problem exists, or to justify a particular strategy; and
- To identify the characteristics of a population (for example, during a baseline survey).

Qualitative research methods are designed to provide the researcher with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in their culture or situation and through direct interaction with them. These methods help to answer questions such as how and why. The focus is on presenting perceptions, judgments, and opinions and on explaining meanings, processes and reasons.

Practical tips and approaches to data gathering

Whenever possible, data collection should be decentralised to those partners that have a direct interest in learning about progress at different levels—for example, value-chain cooperatives can report on sales growth and member performance; wholesalers and private sector partners can report on the quality of produce received; staff can provide briefings on leadership issues or socioeconomic changes in visited programme areas through their trip reports; service providers can report on training results and future training needs; etc. Assessment of outcomes from training can be measured through knowledge, attitude and practice surveys. For each type of data to be collected, it is necessary to develop specific forms that (a) enable the responsible partner/actor/staff to collect data efficiently and effectively and (b) are appropriate for data entry processes. Following are some procedures and tools that are typically used by projects to gather primary data.

Preparing field reports

During field work, project staff should seek to provide feedback to the M&E system by undertaking the following, subject to time availability relative to key tasks assigned in the travel terms of reference:

- Gauge progress towards achieving the operation's objectives;
- Determine beneficiaries' perceptions and reactions to project activities and assistance;
- Assess ownership and utilisation of assets created and identify any negative effects;

- Assess the quantity and quality of work undertaken and the appropriateness of other activities;
- Make physical checks of assets, inputs or other distributed items, if any;
- Help managers and partners identify problems and make decisions to overcome them;
- Establish productive relationships with local government and implementing partners; and
- Ensure that men and women beneficiaries are fully involved in implementation and monitoring of the operation.

Collecting data from community visits

These debriefing reports complement any data collection that is prescribed within the M&E plan. Data from field visits provide critical information for management to make decisions about operations. Selection of people to interview is one important element of ensuring that the information required is effectively collected. Persons (women, men, boys and girls) you will interview or discuss with in the field are called 'respondents'. Examples of potential 'respondents' include:

- Children, boys and girls;
- Female heads of households;
- Men and women beneficiaries individually and in groups;
- Community representatives, local leaders, traditional leaders, both men and women;
- Local government officials, district government officials;
- Technical staff;
- Donor, NGO representatives active in the operation area; and
- Private sector representatives (e.g., market vendors, truckers).

Identifying and selecting respondents

Identifying the right people to interview is largely determined by the data that staff need to collect. These data are defined in the indicators listed in the logical framework and correspond with various data sources. Visits to the field are one of these data sources.

Respondent criteria should be selected ahead of time based on who is in the best position to answer the questions you will ask or topics you will raise. For example, if you intend to ask about child nutrition, it is often best to ask mothers rather than village leaders or others in the field site.

The number of total interviews or group discussions is determined beforehand when sampling decisions are being made and should not be left to interpretation in the field. Deciding on the number is usually a balance between enough for a fair 'representation' and a reasonable workload given the time and financial resources available.

The number of participants in group sessions is determined by the method. Different qualitative methods have a suggested number of participants based on an understanding of how the number of people positively and negatively affects the discussion.

Once you have identified the ideal respondents, you must devise a method for selecting them in the field. The two most common methods are random selection and purposive selection and both have their merits:

- **Purposive selection**, intentionally selecting individuals because you think they are in the best position to provide you with accurate data, is used in qualitative and rapid data collection methods. This is especially true for key informant interviews where specific individuals (e.g., women head of households, adolescent girls, community leaders, traditional healers, etc.) may be in a better position to discuss topics or answer questions than the average respondent.
- **Random selection** can be done in many different ways and has less selection bias than purposive selection if done properly. Random selection of individual respondents or participants in group discussions is often a good technique to use when everyone wants to participate and your method or time constraints demand limited participation. If the random selection method is explained to all potential respondents in a group, most individuals readily accept the fact that they have or have not been chosen for participation.

Conducting interviews and discussions

Regardless of the data collection method being used, a written interview or discussion guide, checklist or questionnaire is critical for ensuring the following:

- All key issues are covered during the field visit;
- Questions or points for discussion are uniformly applied, regardless of when the field visit is conducted or who conducts it;
- The methods and questions used in monitoring are consistent across time and place (M&E strategies that rely on individuals are avoided, and a system is established and put in place); and
- Data analysts clearly understand the questions or topics discussed and are able to make sense of the answers received (especially outlying or uncommon answers).

Using interview and discussion guides, checklists or questionnaires. The data collection methods that can be used range from a formal questionnaire in which answers are ticked or filled in by enumerators (i.e., data collectors) to an informal list of three to five points that should be brought up during a community discussion. The selection of the appropriate option is largely driven by the type of data that needs to be collected.

Familiarising data collection teams with the content. Regardless of whether a formal questionnaire or a checklist of points for key informants is being used for interviews, the people applying the tool in the field must become familiar with that tool before using it with real respondents. This is critical for ensuring that the tool does not become a burden or disruption to the rapport established with respondents. A data collector who is obviously reading straight from a sheet of paper can easily ruin an informal exchange of thoughts and ideas. An experienced and well-prepared data collector reviews the points prior to meeting with respondents and then glances over them once more at the end of the session in order to ensure that no key points have been

missed.

Data collectors should not limit themselves to the topics listed, especially when using qualitative methods. For almost all participatory and rapid methods, data collectors should develop follow-up questions related to respondents' answers. The list of topics or discussion points on a checklist should serve only to remind the data collector of key issues to bring up and should not limit or prevent discussion of other topics.

Pretesting and adjustment. Prior to undertaking a large-scale data collection exercise, it is important that formal questionnaires are pretested to ensure that they will work in the field. It is also critical to spend an adequate number of days training data collection teams for formal or large-scale surveys. Teams are often

Special considerations for qualitative interviews

Qualitative interviews differ from traditional structured interviews, in which formal questionnaires are used, by not being limited to a set of predetermined questions to be asked in sequence. The following gives the characteristics of six key techniques that are employed interdependently when using qualitative methods:

- **Triangulation**—This refers to the process of crosschecking information. Triangulation uses multidisciplinary teams that include different skills, experience and viewpoints; a range of tools and techniques for data collection and analysis; and different sources of information about the same problem. In this way, the reliability and bias of findings can be assessed and, if necessary, addressed.
- **Multidisciplinary approach**—People with different skills, experience and viewpoints will look for different views, perspectives and analysis of a given topic, and the team as a whole will obtain new and deeper insights when these different perspectives are shared. Women and men should always be included on the team, as should members of the community or group in question. **Mixing techniques**—Using different techniques gives greater depth to the information collected. Typically, the team would aim to use a mixture of interview and discussion techniques, diagrams and mapping and direct observation.
- **Community involvement**—consider what activities can be performed jointly with the community or by the community on its own.
- **Flexibility and on-the-spot analysis**—Plans and methods are semi-structured and discussed and modified as fieldwork proceeds. The team constantly reviews and analyses its findings to decide how to continue. As understanding increases, emerging issues and unexpected findings come more clearly into focus, and plans, topics and methods can be revised.
- **Offsetting bias**—The team should constantly seek to identify possible sources of error and bias and see how they influence findings. Views should be obtained from a cross-section of the community or group, including women and children and other vulnerable groups. This may require advance training in skills such as gender awareness, communicating with children, etc.

composed of hired “outsiders”, and it is essential that all data collectors understand the intention behind each question in the same way so as to ensure consistency in the questions’ application and explanation to respondents. This also applies to discussion guides or checklists for which the key points and the intent behind raising specific topics should be reviewed prior to fieldwork. Discussion guides and checklists should be adjusted if, during the first few applications of the tools or during the first few attempts to analyse the data, additional points are found to be necessary.

Translation. All questionnaires, checklists or discussion guides must be translated into the language in which the interviews, discussions or meetings will be held. Data collectors in the field should not be expected to translate during the course of interviews or discussions because this will lead to inconsistent translation among collectors, or even by the same collector when meeting with subsequent groups or individuals.

Data collection versus data analysis. Taking notes during an interview or discussion, regardless of the methodology being used, is critical for ensuring that what the respondents say is accurately captured. A common error is for data collectors to interpret or analyse what respondents have said prior to writing it down. It is crucial to separate data collection from data analysis and to avoid assuming that you know what the respondent meant. Data collectors should be encouraged to note any analytic insight that they might gain from their field experience, but this should not be confused with documenting what the respondents have actually said.

Key steps to follow in field interviews and discussions

1. Be sure to separate description and raw data collection from your own analysis, judgment, interpretation or insight.
2. Do not attempt to recall what was said in an interview or discussion at a later time (e.g., in the car or back at the office). Inevitably, such recalled data will be biased by your own insights and analysis.
3. Be disciplined and conscientious in taking detailed field notes at all stages of the fieldwork, including notes on how the fieldwork that was carried out differed from the fieldwork that was planned. Notes about how the respondents were selected (in relation to the planned sampling strategy) are important for assessing comparability among data collected from different sites and at different points in time.
4. Be descriptive when taking notes. While it is critical to document what respondents said, note also focus group participants’ reactions to points that were made in the discussions as well as any other relevant visual observations that you make. The intent is to have data that describe accurately not only what was said but also the setting in which it was said.
5. Make notes that refer to the interview or discussion guide, checklist or questionnaire that you are using. It is often helpful to create the checklist with space for adding field notes, ensuring that each note is correctly situated under the relevant checklist point. Another option is to number the discussion guide or checklist points and refer to these numbers in your notes. For questionnaires, the usual practice is to leave space for ticking or filling in answers on the questionnaire itself.
6. Quote directly from interviews or discussions. This allows people to be represented in their own words and terms. It also provides powerful anecdotal evidence for reports, proposals, etc.

7. Use the notes that you have taken to confirm important points that are made in order to ensure that you have understood their intended meaning fully. Notes also facilitate crosschecking with other sources.
8. Even if you think that a point is not important, document it. This serves two purposes: the point may prove to be important either later in the interview/discussion or during analysis and your noting of every point assures respondents that you are being unbiased in what you document and giving each person's ideas equal value.
9. Do not let note taking disrupt the flow of the conversation, interview or discussion. In one-on-one interviews, this is not usually a problem. In group settings, however, where your role as facilitator is paramount, the use of a facilitator and a separate note taker is the best approach.

The importance of critical reflection in ensuring impact

Collecting and analysing information is only one half of the M&E system. In fact, there is no point in collecting information if it is not used for decision making. Without critical reflection, M&E data will not help for management and impact but will only meet the bureaucratic demands of M&E. Critical reflections are essential to move beyond collecting, processing and reviewing data. It leads to learning, by documenting and sharing decisions, and ensuring that decisions are implemented. In many cases, M&E systems give too much focus on data collection and disregard the end of the chain, which renders the system at best, weak and at worse, completely useless.

Critical reflection is the process of asking “why?”, “so what?”, and “now what?” after M&E data show what has happened. It can be done through:

- questioning and analysing experiences, observations, beliefs and/or assumptions;
- interpreting experiences and data to create new insights and agreement on actions; and
- questioning what is normally taken for granted, particularly programme assumptions.

Critical reflection can happen in any forum. It is however important to plan how to integrate a sequence of critical reflection events to ensure clarity of insight and decisions during programme implementation.

A wider agenda for communication of M&E results

Communication is a critical feature in the results-based management agenda because it allows programme management to monitor progress, obtain timely warning of delay, promote collaboration and facilitate motivation through the participation of partners and team members. The programme needs an effective information system that provides continuous and frequent reports—giving supporting evidence of (or lack of) progress. The programme team must therefore monitor its own progress with respect to specific, real and measurable achievements/setbacks, which are formally reported.

Two sets of M&E findings need to be communicated. Firstly, draft M&E findings should be discussed with implementing partners and primary stakeholders in order to get feedback on accuracy, reach joint conclusions and agree on next steps. Once the M&E findings are agreed upon, these can be communicated to funding agencies, cooperating institutions, government departments and other programmes.

Furthermore, a good communication strategy can generate more support and interest in the programme. The M&E system should enable the programme implementation unit to identify lessons learned, best practices and innovations. The programme should make sure that these success stories are communicated and, when relevant information is available, articles and photos could be prepared. Local journalists can also be contacted to ensure good practices are mentioned in the local media for wider dissemination.

Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

M&E monitoring and evaluation

NGO non-governmental organisation

Resources

For additional guidance on data collection methods, see the World Food Programme guide hyperlinked below: http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ko/mekb_module_13.pdf

Bio-sketch and contact details

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Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Monitoring and Evaluation



The wide variety of methods available for conducting project and programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can be overwhelming. Each method has its advantages; limitations; skill, knowledge, time and cost requirements; and a range of reporting possibilities. In carrying out M&E activities, programme officers may use established research methods from the biophysical and social sciences, including a growing collection of participatory methods. These methods fall into two broad categories: qualitative and quantitative. Understanding the differences and overlaps of qualitative and quantitative methods and their corresponding data collection and analysis can help inform M&E data collection choices at various points in a project's life cycle.

Quantitative and qualitative methods—an overview

Quantitative methods directly measure the status or change of a specific variable, for example, changes in crop yield, kilometres of road built or number of hours women spend fetching water. Quantitative methods provide direct numerical results. Quantitative methods can be also classified as “formal” methods in that they use a structured questionnaire or other form of data collection.

Qualitative methods gather information by asking people to explain what they observe, do, believe or feel. The output from qualitative methods is textual descriptions. Qualitative methods can also be called “informal” in that they do not use a structured questionnaire and have an open-ended approach to gathering data.

Each method has advantages and disadvantages.

Choosing to use a method to produce or analyse qualitative or quantitative data depends not only on the type of information needed but also on the capacities and resources available, how the information will be used and how precise the data need to be. Yet, the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches are not absolute. For example, much qualitative information can be quantified—opinions can be clustered into groups and then counted, thereby becoming quantitative. Rather than relying on one method exclusively, more M&E practitioners are finding that a *combination* of methods increases their ability to better understand and interpret complex situations.

Quantitative methods produce data that are easily represented as numbers, answering questions such as “**How much...?**”, “**How many...?**”, and “**How frequent ...?**”.

Quantitative data generally require formal measurements of variables such as income, production or population densities.

Qualitative methods produce data that are not easily summarised in numerical form, broadly answering the “**how**” and “**why**” through, for instance, meetings, interviews or general observations. Qualitative data are more appropriate for understanding people’s attitudes or behaviours, beliefs, opinions, experiences and priorities. Qualitative data include answers to questions like “Why do you think this happened?” and “How do you think this will affect you?”.

Quantitative methods	Qualitative methods
Advantages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide robust, quantified findings • Information easier to analyse 	Advantages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful to gain insights on what is happening • Easy to organise and cost-effective (small samples)
Limitations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly to organise (large samples) • Do not provide contextual information • Offer limited insights on what is happening 	Limitations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information collected cannot be generalised • Information harder to analyse

Regardless of what method is used, they will produce high-quality results if they are:

- Based on valid/credible data/ information (the information comes from the correct source)
- Representative, they can be generalised (a representative sample)
- Reliable and dependable (can be done again in future)
- Objective, confirmable (they must have been clearly documented)

Combining qualitative and quantitative methods

There are many advantages in combining methods while carrying out M&E. In some cases, methods are combined because the data are best gathered in a variety of ways—no single methodology would produce all the data needed (see example below).

Diverse methods for sustainability monitoring in the Karnataka Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, India

A village-based, sustainability-monitoring process was developed to understand what issues could potentially adversely affect the sustainability of water and sanitation services in India. A set of nine questionnaires was developed to be used in visits to 15 villages, with the following topics: village socioeconomic profile; technical: water supply (asset condition and profile); technical: sanitation (drainage, soak-pits and dustbins); technical: sanitation (household latrines); financial: costs, tariff, billing and collection; institutional: village water and sanitation committee – composition, functions and effectiveness; household: facts, perception of demand met; social: participation by women and poor; and tap stand monitoring.

Preparation and data collection

Before starting the data collection, a 1-day preparatory workshop was held for the teams to brainstorm about the concept and the methods. A variety of methods were used in order to answer the questionnaires: direct observations, general meetings, focus group discussions, household surveys, and observations and interviews of villagers while collecting water at the public tap stands.

Collation and analysis

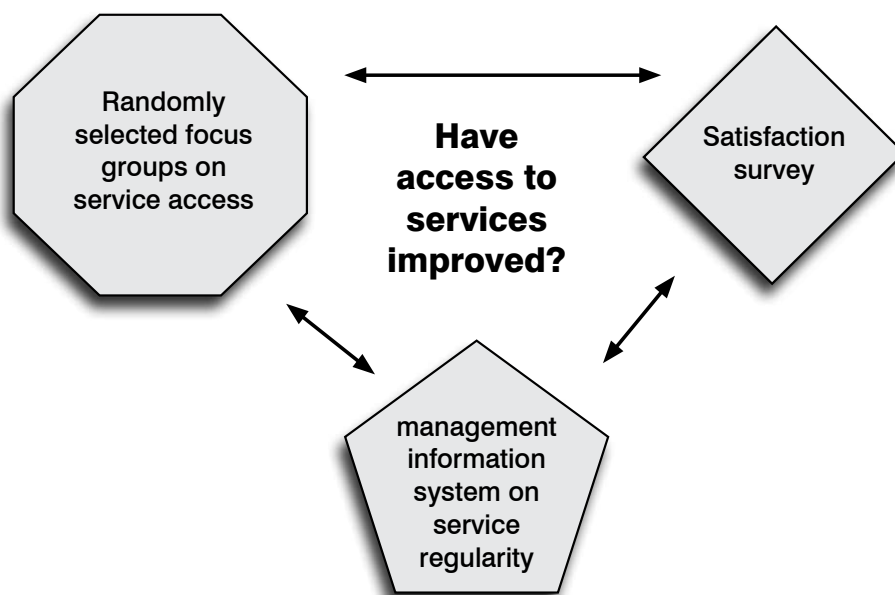
After the fieldwork, all the data collected through the questionnaires and scores of the 71 indicators were converted into a sustainability index for each village. The analysis revealed that nine out of the 15 villages visited fell into the “likely to be sustainable” category (60% with a score above 0.65), five into the “uncertain” category (33% between 0.50 and 0.64) and one in the “unlikely” category (below 0.50).

In other cases, methods are combined to confirm or help interpret results. For example, a participatory rural appraisal process used to find out how primary stakeholders are benefiting from a project might combine some 15 or more different methods ranging from transect walks to matrix ranking and focus group discussions. Likewise, a household survey or annual project review meeting would combine a series of interview, discussion and facilitation methods.

It is now strongly recommended that M&E be conducted with a mix of methods so that information can be “triangulated” in order to double or triple check results (see Figure 1).

Furthermore, it is possible to combine methods within one data collection tool. For example, quantitative surveys can also collect qualitative information, such as the opinion of the respondent about useful project services. In fact, the current guidelines for annual outcome surveys largely collect qualitative information such as opinion on the direction and size of changes. Questionnaires can also include open-ended questions, such as “What is your main problem in farming?”.

Figure 1. Example of triangulation of a mix of quantitative and qualitative M&E methods.



Similarly, qualitative methods can gather some quantitative data. This can be a useful approach where the individual respondents in a formal survey would find it difficult to provide accurate data. For example, data on crop inputs, outputs, prices, costs and returns may be best obtained in a focus group discussion with a group of farmers who can come to agreement between themselves on typical numbers for these indicators.

Combining M&E methods along the results chain

IFAD’s results-based management framework and the logical framework approach that mirrors it provide a context within which to consider the fit of various M&E tools and methods along the results chain.

Table 1 shows what methods are recommended to monitor each level of the results chain, taking into account that certain methods will be more expensive, time-consuming and technically complex than others. Descriptions of the most common methods recommended for use in IFAD projects follow the table.

Table 1. Tools that can be used in the results chain.

Results chain	Quantitative data used	Qualitative data used
Activity and output Tools are used to measure effectiveness of project strategies and are collected every month or at the end of each quarter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and output tracking tools like data collection forms and matrices • Diaries and farm record books and self-help group records • Micro-finance records • Staff records • Annual work plan and budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Diagramming
Outcome (collected annually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire survey (annual outcome survey / thematic outcome survey) • KAP surveys of training outcomes • GIS annual surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group discussions • Key informant interviews • Case studies • “H” diagramming and input-output diagramming
Impact (data collected three times during the life cycle of the project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire surveys for baseline, mid-term and final evaluation (RIMS and RIMS+) • Statistics on production, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagramming • Focus group discussions • Key informant interviews • Most significant change • Case studies

The table above divides the data collection tools between those used to measure outcomes and those used to measure impact, but, in practice, there can be considerable overlap. Although mid-term and end-of-project surveys aim to gather evidence of project impact, it is useful to gather information on project outputs and outcomes so that it is possible to link impacts to outputs and outcomes via a results chain, which helps attribute project activities to results. Annual outcome surveys can also collect impact level data, such as changes in food security and assets. This gives project management an indication of initial impacts and can be useful to complement data from mid-term and end-of project (completion) impact surveys. There is always a risk that data from one of the surveys carried out at baseline, mid-term and completion will be distorted by unusual climatic, disease or economic events, and so it does not provide a good basis for comparison with other surveys. Collecting data annually can mitigate this risk. In fact, a good system of data collection in annual outcome surveys can reduce the need for so much data to be collected in impact surveys—although these may still be needed for indicators such as child anthropometrics and also for indicators where little change is expected from year to year—such as the quality of housing, water and sanitation.

Mixing methods in practice

Thematic outcome surveys

A study on the impact of training for the Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Programme in Bhutan used the following methods for gathering information:

- A formal questionnaire survey of a random 470 rural households who had received training
- A formal questionnaire survey of a sample of 47 extension staff involved in providing training
- Focus group discussions (30) with a total of 337 rural households
- Focus group discussions (25) with a total of 50 extension staff

The final report has tables analysing data from the formal survey, including qualitative information such as farmers' assessment of the quality of training. The focus group discussions were used to provide more detailed explanation of the formal survey data, such as why it was difficult to persuade people to go on residential training courses, and provide specific examples of technology adoption and factors preventing adoption. In addition, the report included seven case studies of individual farmers and groups describing how training has helped to develop their enterprises and livelihoods.

Planned impact evaluation surveys

The new IFAD-supported Integrated Livelihood Support Project in India proposes to contract an agency to carry out baseline, mid-term and final impact studies. Their approach combines both qualitative and quantitative (formal and informal) methods. The following terms of reference developed for this project could be easily adopted by other projects:

1. An initial informal reconnaissance of the project area to understand the project approach and implementation practices and to identify appropriate indicators and sampling methods for a formal survey. The study team would meet project staff and participants, as well as other local people (the potential control group). Key evaluation questions would be posed to find out what happened, to whom and how. At the end of this process, a brief inception report for project management would be prepared.
2. A formal questionnaire survey would then gather quantitative data (and maybe also some qualitative opinions). Initial analysis of results would be carried out before the next step.
3. This survey would be followed up by further informal investigations, such as focus group discussions, to find out why and how the changes observed in the formal survey took place (or why expected changes did not take place). In addition, some case studies of project households and groups would be carried out.
4. The final report would combine information from all these sources.

Most common quantitative methods used in IFAD projects

Surveys are among the common quantitative tools for outcome and impact assessment. In addition to the RIMS survey that is required for every IFAD project, there are several other survey tools often employed for M&E purposes. Surveys are an efficient way to capture information from a small, representative sample of beneficiaries and can track outcomes and impact at different project intervals. The use of surveys requires skills in sampling methods and the selecting and training of enumerators.

Surveys

1. *Baseline, mid-term and end-of-the-project survey* – a baseline survey is often part of a well-planned impact evaluation survey where data are collected at or before the start of a project. In certain projects, baseline information is used as a planning tool, but it may be necessary to wait for project group members to be recruited if information is to be gathered on the baseline situation of project participants. Mid-term surveys and end-of-the-project surveys use a similar questionnaire administered at baseline so that data can be compared. If at all possible, data should be collected from random samples of treatment (project) and control groups to ensure rigor in impact evaluation. These surveys may include RIMS anchor indicators and so be RIMS+ surveys, although it may sometimes be easier to collect RIMS anthropometric indicators in a separate survey.



2. *Annual outcome survey* – is a simple survey conducted with a small sample of about 400 randomly selected households split between project and control groups. The surveys are undertaken annually in order to regularly measure the positive/negative changes taking place at the household level. They provide information that project management teams can use to take timely, corrective action during the course of project implementation.
3. *Thematic outcome survey* – is a variation on the annual outcome survey. It focuses on a single component or theme, and surveys may cover different themes in different years.

Geographic information system

Satellite imagery is used for the collection of information and computers are used for interpretation. Data are gathered on spatial changes, soil erosion and rehabilitation mapping, and for mapping change in cropping patterns over time. These are usually collected at baseline prior to project intervention and later after project completion.

Most common qualitative methods used in IFAD projects

These methods are useful to provide explanations of trends, reasons for success or failure, external events affecting project implementation as well as insights on beneficiaries' perceptions, feelings, opinions, and concerns. They are most useful when used in conjunction with quantitative surveys as they can help better interpret survey findings.

Key informant interview

A key informant interview is conducted with a person who can provide detailed information and opinion on a particular subject based on his or her knowledge of a particular issue. For example, this could be information on how project activities have influenced the use of water resources in the community when the key informant is a member of a water users' association. A key informant can be young or old and from any socioeconomic or ethnic group. Key informant interviews are open-ended, semi-structured interviews. Every interview should have clear objectives about what kind of information is needed and how the information will be used.

Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion is facilitated discussion among 8-12 carefully selected participants. The idea is that group members discuss the topic among themselves with guidance from a facilitator. It is a method used to obtain in-depth qualitative information on perceptions and ideas from a group of people who have something in common. For example, they have a shared interest in the topic or are from similar backgrounds. Homogeneous groups are preferred because mixed age or gender groups may inhibit some people (especially women or youth) from expressing their views in front of others. Focus group discussions are structured around a set of pre-determined questions—usually no more than 10 but the discussion should be free-flowing. Ideally, participants' comments will stimulate and influence the thinking and sharing of others. If facilitated well, focus

group discussions can bring out rich and detailed information. They generally stimulate rich responses and provide a valuable opportunity to gain insights into behaviour, attitudes and feelings. It takes more than one focus group discussion on any one topic to produce valid results, usually three or four. You will know you have conducted enough discussions (with the same set of questions) when you are not hearing anything new anymore. That is, you have reached a point of saturation. Focus group discussions generate qualitative information and the outputs will be a textual description of a situation. As such, findings will not be representative of the views of the entire population. This is why focus group discussions are best used to complement the findings of RIMS surveys or annual outcome surveys, for example, to understand better a specific finding emerging from these surveys.

Case studies in practice

- **Studies commissioned for the impact evaluation of roads and small enterprises in the Agriculture, Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Programme in Bhutan included case studies as well as quantitative surveys.**
- **An evaluation of micro-enterprises supported by Proshika, an NGO in Bangladesh, used case studies as the main means of data collection.**

Case studies

In-depth interviews, usually with an individual household (but it could also be a group or an enterprise) in order to write a brief story about their experience with the project. They usually adopt a historical perspective to show the situation that the household was in before they joined the project, followed by a description of various project interventions and their outcomes, which may have been spread over some years. Improvements to living standards are described along with the opinions of household members about the project and their plans for the future. Case studies can also be a good way of collecting information on small and medium enterprises (SME). Questionnaire surveys tend to be not so good at collecting information from SME since these businesses vary too greatly (in terms of sector, activity, scale, financing, etc.) for a standard questionnaire to be used.

Case studies (illustrated with photographs) are often included as boxes in project reports, where they add a human dimension to an otherwise dry description and data. As such, case studies tend to be success stories, but they can also be valuable as a means of finding out why things did not go as expected. For example, a thematic study of enterprise development could ask each project implementing unit (such as a district office or NGO) to produce two case studies of success stories, two of failures and two that are between success and failure.

Other methods

- The knowledge, attitude and practice survey (KAP) is a simple survey with a small sample (about 40 to 50) of people who have attended a specific training course or other capacity-building event. It aims to find out if the training was successful and if it resulted in a change in practice (such as adoption of a new technology).
- Biophysical surveys, trend lines and time-series data are other tools that can be used to collect data on natural resource management, agriculture, nutrition and health. Statistics on crop production may be

Mixing methods in practice

Monitoring project results

The recently completed IFAD grant project Scaling up Micro-Irrigation Systems was implemented in two districts of Orissa in India by the NGO IDE-India. Project field staff reported on total numbers of farmers reached and numbers adopting three different types of micro-irrigation systems used to grow vegetables. An annual survey was used to collect data on vegetable production, consumption and sales from a random sample of 240 farmers in 47 villages (80 farmers for each of the three technologies). This was supplemented by the Most Significant Change methodology where a small number of farmers were asked about what they thought was the most significant change brought about by the project and what difficulties they faced.

Impact evaluation

The Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP) on the coast of southern Bangladesh has been funded by the Netherlands government since the start of Phase I in 1994. IFAD has now joined with the Netherlands government to co-finance Phase IV. Prior to the start of phase IV, IFAD and its Netherlands partner did an evaluation of Phases I, II and III to find out what benefits might be expected from Phase IV, and to see if the improvements of Phases I and II, completed in prior years, had been sustained. The following sources of information were used in this evaluation:

- Qualitative participatory rural appraisal survey on impact of the project, with 10 focus group discussions in each of the three project areas.
- Quantitative sample survey covering a random sample of 900 households.
- Qualitative study of gender interventions and impact using focus group discussions and case studies.
- Secondary data: earlier reports on project outputs and outcomes, including case studies.

CDSP is a land reclamation project, and the quantitative sample survey provided data on farmers' opinions on how flooding, drainage and salinity on their land had changed between 2004 and 2010. The participatory rural appraisal survey was able to provide more detailed timelines regarding trends in land quality over a longer period. Secondary project data provided time-series data on soil salinity measurements. The sample survey provided data on livestock ownership, income, assets, housing, water and sanitation, and access to micro-finance. The participatory rural appraisal activity generated matrices showing changes in farming practices and livelihoods in each of the project areas, as well as changes in wealth ranking. The gender study contributed a specific women's perspective on the changes resulting from the project, highlighting issues such as access to health services.

useful—both as evidence of trends that may partly result from project contributions and as a basis of comparison with survey data from project participants.

- Most Significant Change stories capture data that cannot be easily quantified. The method uses narratives and stories from participants to understand changes brought about by the project at the household level. It is also used to capture institutional changes as a result of project intervention—as the title suggests: the most significant change. Both positive and negative changes are distilled from human stories to complement quantitative impact analysis.
- Other qualitative methods that can be used for M&E include brainstorming, diagramming, and mapping.

Additional resources

A number of IFAD resources elaborate extensively on various methods for different M&E needs and how to conduct them.

One very good overview of methods is found in Annex D of IFAD's publication, *A Guide for Project M&E*. This Annex summarises 34 methods that are useful for specific M&E tasks. Each method is briefly explained in terms of purpose, steps and application tips. Available at: <http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/annexd/index.htm>.

IFAD ASIA's resource section hosts a number of videos and presentations on a variety of themes, including M&E. Here you can also find links to download the full text of IFAD's Monitoring and Evaluation Knowledge Management Tool Box. This publication includes workshop material and specific technical guidelines for RIMS+ surveys, annual outcome surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and sampling methods for sample-based surveys. It is available online under M&E Toolkit Collection within the Resource Library of <http://asia.ifad.org>.

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Source

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The Logical Framework (Logframe) Approach



The logical framework matrix

The logical framework (logframe) is used to communicate key information about project objectives, outcomes and outputs in a systematic and logical way. It provides a synthesized description of what the project is trying to achieve and how it will be achieved. In its various uses as a communication tool, the logframe is able to support results-based management:

- It specifies an action plan with various stakeholders, who may have different perspectives to contribute, that builds a joint definition of problems and objectives;
- It provides a results chain that can serve as a strategic road map, illustrating which actions and deliverables are needed to contribute to higher level goals and targets;
- It determines how progress will be measured (specifying key information needs and feeding the process of planning information gathering);
- It acts as a framework for measuring, reporting and communicating progress to key stakeholders, in direct reference to the project's overall strategy and underlying pillars.
- By specifying assumptions and risks, it describes external factors that influence the success of the project's strategy and that need to be reviewed periodically to re-validate or re-calibrate the project's strategic approach.

Used flexibly, the logframe is an adaptable tool that can be updated throughout the project life. The logical framework approach has a lot of benefits:

The Logframe Approach and its Benefits in a Nutshell	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project design is participatory ▪ Starts with problem analysis ▪ Grounded on the results chain theory ▪ Logframe matrix can be used as a flexible management tool ▪ Facilitates systematic assessment of the project intervention model, using the logic of 'cause' and 'effect' ▪ Presents clear objectives to all stakeholders ▪ Clear performance framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ States explicit conditions for success (assumptions) to be monitored! ▪ Clear accountability framework ▪ Encourages flexibility, by reviewing and revising the logframe in the light of experience gained and changes in external environment ▪ Provides an effective way of communicating the project intervention succinctly and clearly.

The basic logframe matrix contains four columns and four rows, (Figure 1).

Narrative Summary	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions and Risks
Goal (Impact)			
Development Objective			
Outcomes			
Outputs			

Figure 1. Basic logframe matrix.

As shown in Figure 1, the logframe matrix summarises what the project should achieve from the goal down to specific project outputs. Like a set of Chinese boxes—with one small box fitting into a larger one—the elements of the logframe are arranged in descending order but are interconnected and feed into a higher level objective:

- The overarching goal to which the project will contribute, normally relates to the Millennium Development Goals and/or national poverty reduction strategy goals. The goal serves as a frame for all elements of the logic model that follow and sets the macro-level context (national development objective) within which the project fits, describing the long-term impact that the project is expected to contribute to. For IFAD projects, the goal should contribute to the realisation of the IFAD country programme targets (RB-COSOP). The goal should specify the target population and geographic location.
- The **development objective** that will be achieved by the end of the project is usually written in terms of a change in behaviour or circumstances. It thus describes the planned change brought about by the project. In other words, it expresses the sustainable impact on the target group in terms of changes in condition (human, economic, civic, environment, etc.). It explains why the project should be undertaken and states what will be achieved by the project, in the time and with the resources available, if:
 - the project is successfully implemented, as planned, by the project team (i.e., activities and outputs delivered);
 - the outcomes are realised; and
 - the external factors which the project team cannot control (i.e., assumptions and risks underpinning the project strategy) are as expected.

In IFAD, a project logframe should reflect only one development objective. The success of the project is evaluated, or otherwise assessed, based on whether the development objective was achieved.

- The **outcomes** are changes directly attributable to outputs and strengthen the linkage between realisation of outputs and achievement of the development objective. If it adds in clarity, the outcomes may be organised by component. This third level in the logframe reflects the change effected in actors' behaviours and capabilities (i.e., in actors' skills, attitude, knowledge and/or practices) or the changes in performance (efficiency and effectiveness) of local systems (e.g., learning systems, extension, banking systems), which occur as a result of outputs delivered by the project. In other words, outcomes are specified in terms of an improvement in what the actors (individuals, groups, families, organisations, systems, or communities) within the sphere of the project will be capable to do during or after the program. Outcomes capture different types of changes—changes in learning (new knowledge, new skills, different attitudes); changes in action (behaviour or practices, decision-making modalities, policies). Outcomes focused on systemic changes—i.e., changes to overall systems—normally reflect how institutions work in new ways, behave differently or provide different services or resources.

Outcomes should be within the scope of the project's control or sphere of reasonable influence, as well as the timeframe. The outcomes should be phrased in terms of change and be measurable. Take care that the outcomes are not re-statements of the outputs.

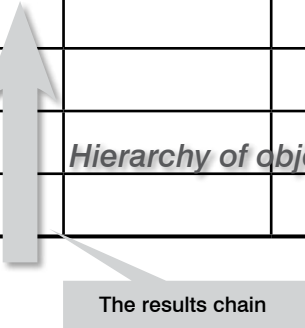
- The **outputs** are the products, services or results that must be delivered by the project to achieve the outcomes and the development objective in the time and with the resources available. The outputs are arranged directly under the outcomes/components to which they relate. This fourth level of the logframe

describes the services or results that the project is expected to deliver with the resources and in the time available. They are measurable, tangible and direct products or results of activities. A combination of outputs leads to a desired outcome but is not itself the change the project will produce.

Earlier versions of the logframe also included activities, means and inputs. These described the actions and resources required for a project to deliver the outputs. These are no longer specified in the logframe as they are normally too detailed for a synthetic logframe document are instead captured elsewhere in the project design document as well as in the project's Annual Work Plans and Budgets.

Table 1. Logframe matrix with its hierarchy of objectives following the results chain.

Narrative summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and risks
Overall goal			
Development Objective			
Outcomes	<i>Hierarchy of objectives</i>		
Outputs			



The direct line from outputs to goal is clearly a simplistic view of development projects. The full complexity of projects cannot easily be captured in a logframe. As explained below, there is a need to soften this direct logic with the reality on the ground. In particular, external conditions can disconnect and redirect the results at one level with the higher objective originally envisaged. These risks are captured in the fourth column and lead to a horizontal and vertical reading of the logframe.

Preparation to develop a logframe

Starting off with a problem tree analysis

One useful approach to developing the strategic approach of a project or programme among partners and stakeholders, is to start with the joint development of a problem tree. This step aims to break down the problem into more specific causes, which can then be translated into challenges that can be addressed through collaborative action and, ultimately, transformed into an opportunity statement (framed as one or a set of objective statements) that the project will pursue. The limitation of this approach is that it directs discussions towards problems and on fixing what does not work, rather than towards creative brainstorming on opportunities. Its advantage is that it helps focus the discussion with participants on where their perspectives (regarding what is inhibiting progress) converge and therefore on where and which actions can lead to changes that improve the current state.

There are different ways to illustrate and visualise a problem tree. Ideally, you will have at hand paper and space to draw on—e.g., flip chart, coloured cards, adhesive tape, markers. The key actors first discuss and specify the core challenge that their project will address.

Having agreed on the core challenge, the group develops the first set of problem drivers by asking the simple question ‘why is this a problem?’. In most cases, there are more direct drivers or causes, some of which might even be beyond the scope of the project (e.g., weather). The team should focus on the ones that are within the scope of their project. In the same way, the group asks the ‘why’ question again for each of their identified direct causes in order to reach their secondary and, in some cases, third- and fourth-level causes. Once you have reached the third (or in some cases, fourth and fifth level), you will have identified your root cause, which gives you the leverage and entry point for your project—i.e., where project partners/stakeholders can take action with support of specific project outputs.

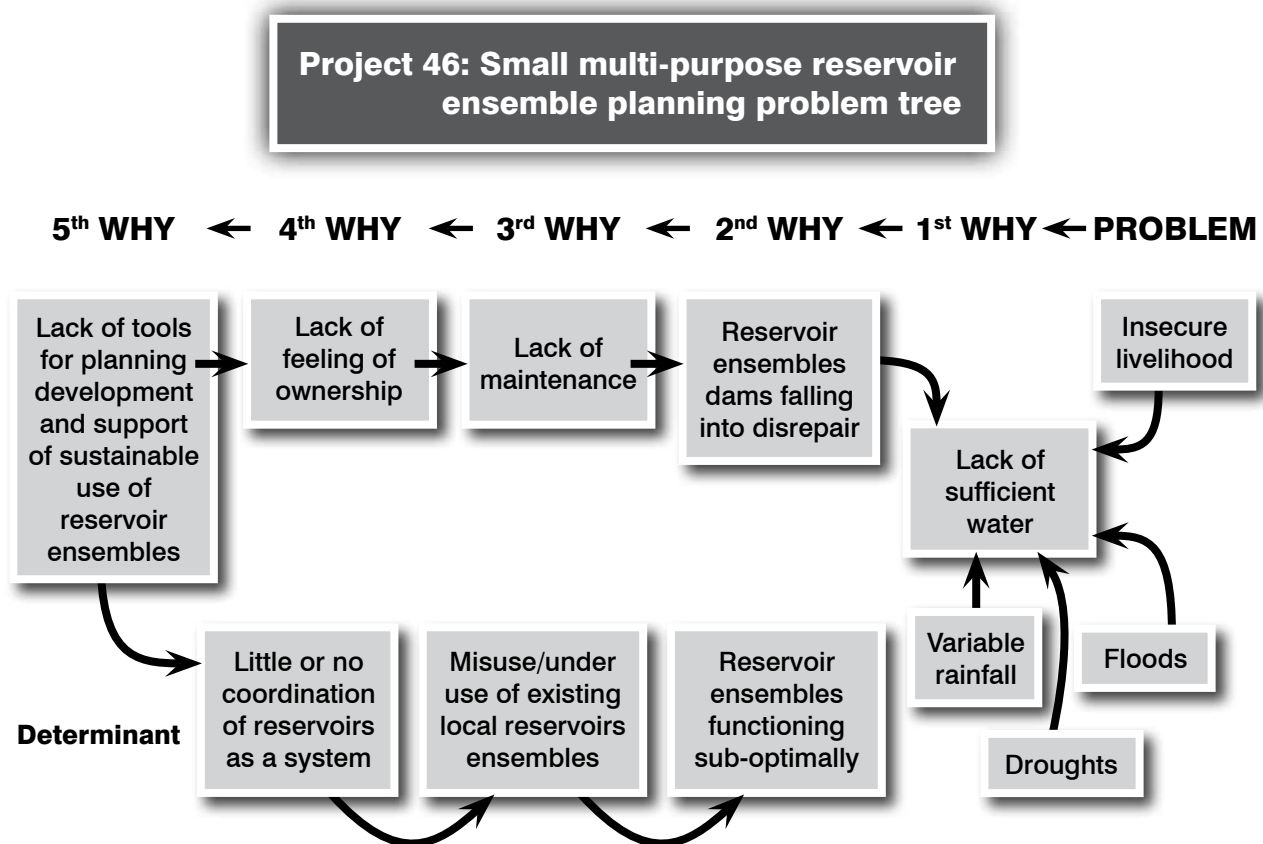


Figure 2. Problem tree analysis of a research for development project on small reservoirs in semi-arid regions.

Transforming problems into opportunities/objectives

The next step would be to turn the focus of the group’s thinking towards the opportunities that arise when successfully addressing the identified issues. These opportunities become the project objectives. The opportunities tree follows the same pattern as the problem tree, responding to the question of ‘why’ or giving reason ‘because’. See figure 2 for an example of an Objective Tree and Figure 3 for the transformation of the problems into objectives for the given example.

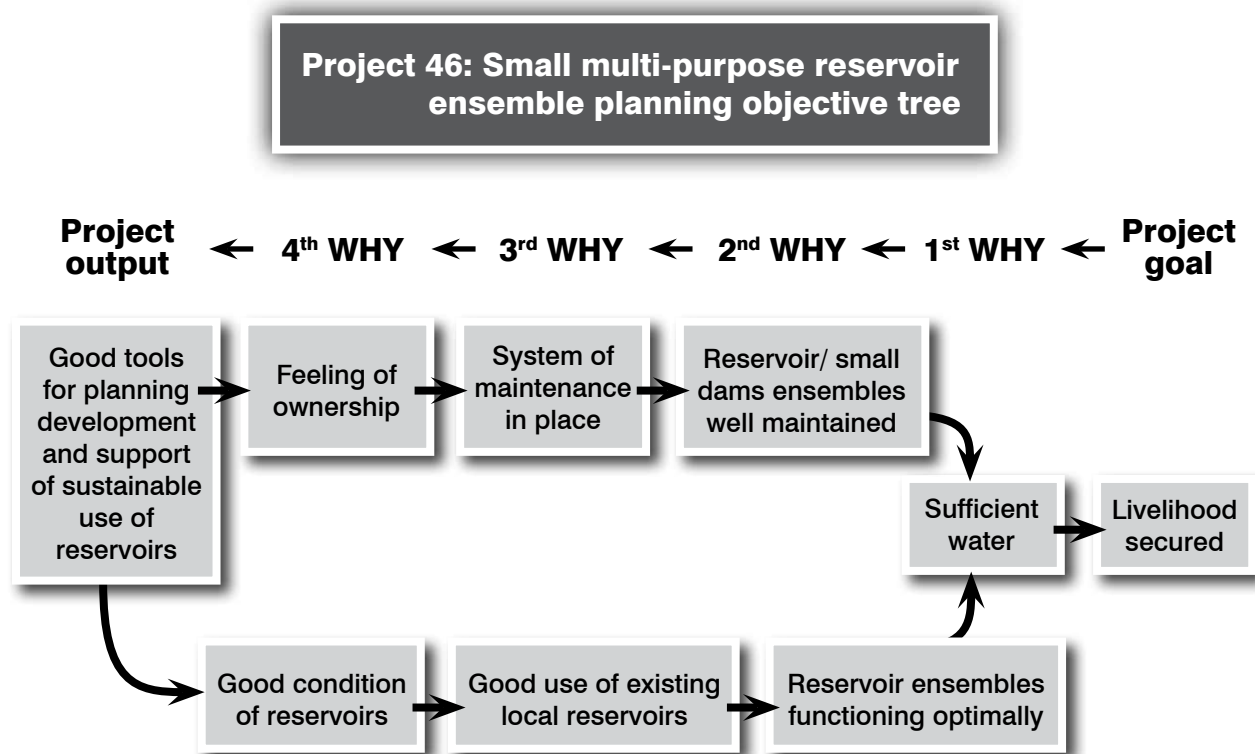


Figure 3. Objective tree for the research for development project on small reservoirs in semi-arid regions.

Filling out the logframe matrix

The process of formulating a logframe builds on a results chain and is normally tackled in the following order:

1. Results hierarchy (Column 1 of the logframe)
2. Assumptions about risks (Column 4 of the logframe)
3. Check vertical logic
4. Verifiable indicators (Column 2 of the logframe)
5. Means of verification (Column 3 of the logframe)

This is also shown in Table 2 with steps and checklists for each column.

Table 2. Logical framework building on the results chain.

COLUMN 1 RESULTS HIERARCHY	COLUMN 4 ASSUMPTIONS	CHECK VERTICAL LOGIC	COLUMN 2 INDICATORS	COLUMN 3 MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Steps <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the goal and development objective 2. Define the outcomes and/or components needed to achieve the development objective 3. Define the outputs that support the outcomes/components. 4. Define the inputs and processing schedule 	Steps <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List key assumptions (risks) that will affect implementation 2. Identify risks that could make the project fail 3. Can the project be redesigned to minimize these risks? 4. What are the key assumptions if the project is to achieve its objectives? 	Steps <p>If the outputs are delivered, outcomes are realised and assumptions are correct, will the development objective definitely be achieved?</p> <p>If the development objective is delivered and assumptions are correct, will the project contribute to achievement of the goal?</p>	Steps <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define two-three indicators to measure or assess the timed achievement of the goal, development objective and each outcome and output 2. Check that mandatory indicators at goal and development objective have been included. 3. Check whether RIMS indicators can be used. 	Steps <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define means of verification for each indicator.
Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single development objective? ▪ Future complete language? ▪ Concise statements (less than 25 words)? ▪ No 'through', 'by' or 'in order to' statements? ▪ Are the outcomes necessary to achieve development objective? ▪ Project management can be expected to deliver outputs? 	Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are assumptions specific and relevant? ▪ Are there assumptions that could prevent the project from achieving its objectives? ▪ Output to development objective assumptions do not need to be linked to specific outputs ▪ Risks have been internalized in the project design wherever possible 		Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do indicators reflect QQT (quantity, quality and time)? ▪ Are indicators practical, efficient, cost-effective and verifiable? ▪ Output indicators do not measure behavioural change ▪ Development objective and goal indicators do measure behavioural change ▪ Are 'people' indicators sex-disaggregated? 	Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are means of verification specified precisely? ▪ Has maximum use been made of easily usable secondary sources of verification, including service providers? ▪ Can the M+E system be developed to provide other information needed for verification?

Column 1: Narrative summary

The narrative summary is an articulation of the project's results hierarchy. The term 'results hierarchy' is used to emphasise the link to results based management (see Table 3. Logical framework results hierarchy).

Table 3. Logical framework results hierarchy (column 1 of the logframe)

Results Hierarchy	Description	Rationale
Goal	The highest level change to which the project can reasonably be expected to contribute and is a consequence of achievement of the development objective. The goal should relate to a specific national objective (e.g., as spelled out in the PRSP).	WHY? Why will we do this project?
Development objective	The end-result of the project if all goes as planned (usually expressed as a sustainable impact on a target group or institution). It is a change that is logically expected to occur once one or more outcomes have been realized. The development objective is usually achieved by the end of project implementation.	WHAT? What are the expected changes in behaviour or circumstances as a result of the project?
Outcomes	A change that is directly attributable to one or more outputs of the project. Outcomes are normally realised during the course of implementation. These are usually at the level of an increase in awareness or skills or access among beneficiaries of the project.	
Outputs	Direct products or services that the project will deliver and for which the project management team can be held accountable.	WHAT? What products and services will the project team deliver in order to achieve the outcomes and development objective?

Table 4. Example of a narrative summary of a logframe.

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions / risks
<p>Goal: To achieve sustainable and equitable poverty reduction and to improve the quality of life of the disadvantaged rural households in targeted areas.</p>			
<p>Development Objective: To improve income-generating and livelihood opportunities for 50,000 poor rural households in targeted areas.</p>			
<p>Outcome 1: To increase agricultural production and productivity.</p>			
<p>Outputs: 1.1 Farmers trained 1.2 Demonstrations held 1.3 Irrigation infrastructure constructed</p>			

Column 4: Assumptions (and risks)

Assumptions explain under which circumstances the project can be successful and the risks describe the actual endangering event to the project. Identifying and assessing risks can be done in a number of ways from the stakeholder analysis, the problem tree analysis, the organisational capabilities matrix, the general work of the design team, etc. Reviewing these risks throughout the design can help planners rethink and redesign the project to make it more effective. During implementation, those and other risks considered likely to happen need to be monitored. In particular, these are external factors that cannot be controlled but that are important for the success of a project.

Once risk are identified, the project team must assess how probable and how critical each risk is to the success of the project. The way to do this is shown in Figure 4. The risks which need to be monitored, or which IFAD and the government need to be warned about must be addressed by assumptions in Column 4 of the logframe.

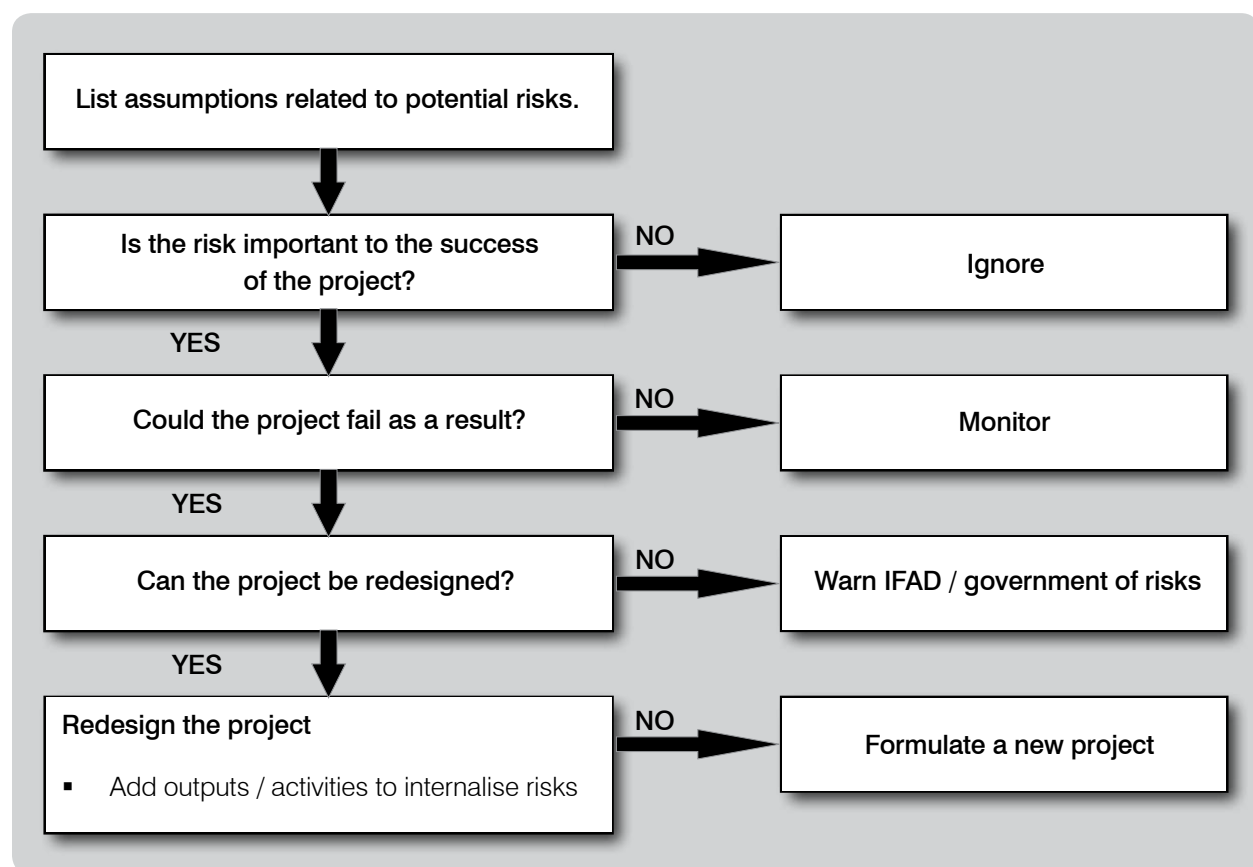


Figure 4. How to analyse risks (for column 4 of the logframe).

To better track progress towards targets, relevant measurements need to be taken. Given the complex challenges the development projects face and the elaborate combinations of possibilities and risks that surround the results chain, it is necessary to plan these measurements in advance. For this reason, column 2 specifies what indicators will be sought for tracking and communicating progress.

Column 2: Indicators

These are the questions that need to be answered to evaluate progress: How will I know that my objectives are being met? How will I know that my interventions are successful and are having the intended outcomes/impact?

The logframe defines the indicators that will be used to monitor progress and overall achievement, and how these indicators will be monitored or where the data can be found. Finally, it reflects the assumptions behind the logic of how activities will eventually contribute to the goal plus the associated risks for the project if the assumptions turn out to be incorrect.

A common pitfall is to look at these indicators as targets or outputs; but they should not be seen that way. Where direct measurement is difficult, indicators are indirect and imperfect measures of the objective, outcome and output targets. M&E work is costly, so selection of indicators must consider the different means (and costs) of collecting information. Some indicators may give the right information, but when the means of getting this is carefully considered, it might become impractical—e.g., too complex or expensive. Indeed, the higher up the results chain one moves, the more distant and difficult measurement becomes, and the bigger the pitfalls in measuring.

A few tips:

- Use as few indicators as necessary.
- Include a measurable target and baseline where possible.
- Indicators should be practical, efficient, cost-effective and verifiable (i.e., means of verification available).
- If direct measures are not available, use 'proxy' indicators (e.g., the mandatory household asset index is used as a proxy for incomes, which are difficult to measure).
- Development objective level indicators measure the 'end-of-project' situation and generally relate to impact on primary stakeholders and sustainability.

There are no absolute rules about what makes a good indicator, however the SMART characteristics (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) are a useful guide.

- **Specific** – Indicators need to be specific and should reflect the essential aspects of the result in precise terms.
- **Measurable** – Quantifiable indicators are preferred because they are precise, can be aggregated and allow further statistical analysis of data. However, development process indicators may be difficult to quantify and qualitative indicators are useful as they can help explain the story behind the numbers. Often, qualitative information can be quantified.
- **Attainable/achievable** – The indicator (or information) must be attainable/ achievable in terms of cost, time and human resources using appropriate collection methods.
- **Relevant** – Indicators should satisfy the management information needs of those who will use the data. Indicators must be selected in such a way that they would be useful to partners in charge of implementation.
- **Timely** – Information on an indicator needs to be collected and reported at the right time to influence management decisions.

As previously stated, key stakeholders must agree on these indicators in advance because they will be used for project evaluation. In this case, they are AS*MART*—Agreed and SMART. Also, indicators should, as far as possible, include estimates of quantity, quality and time (QQT). An example of how to create a QQT indicator is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. How to construct a verifiable indicator (column 2 of the logframe).

STEP 1	Basic Indicator	Business development skills training provided.
STEP 2	Add quantity (HOW MUCH?)	Business development skills training provided to at least 1000 entrepreneurs.
STEP 3	Add quality (WHAT?)	At least 1,000 entrepreneurs (50% women) trained in basic bookkeeping and business planning skills.
STEP 4	Add time (WHEN?)	At least 1,000 entrepreneurs (50% women) trained in basic bookkeeping by end of PY2. At least 1,000 entrepreneurs (50% women) trained in business planning skills by end of PY2.

It is not always possible to assess all indicators in terms of QQT. In some cases, it may be necessary to have two indicators—e.g., one quantitative and one qualitative. Indicators at the output level should not involve changes in behaviour by key stakeholders or institutions; indicators of outcomes and the development objective generally will do so.

Indicators should be disaggregated by sex and, if possible, by other important groups (e.g., youth, indigenous people) and geographical location (e.g., ‘flood-prone areas in northern X’). All ‘people’ indicators must be disaggregated by sex, (see example below). The middle one is preferred because it gives a SMART indicator.

Column 1 (Outputs)	Column 2 (Indicators)
<i>1.2.1 Village Development Committees established</i>	<i>Number of VDCs established</i>
1.2.1 Village Development Committees established	140 VDCs established by 2010
<i>1.2.1 Village Development Committees established in 140 participating villages</i>	<i>Number of VDCs established</i>

Finally, indicators provide a basis for monitoring progress in the delivery of outputs and progress towards achieving outcome, thus underpinning the M&E plan of the project. The indicators contained in the logframe are those most useful for assessing results, but they are not the only indicators in a project M&E system.

Column 3: Means of Verification

The means of verification (MoV) column (Column 3) specifies how information will be collected. MoVs may be either existing sources of information (e.g., official government statistics; statistics collected by partner organisations, in particular service providers) or data especially collected for the project (e.g., through surveys). If a project needs to undertake special MoV surveys, the activity must be included as part of the project's M&E system and the cost added to the budget. Information from service providers should be used as much as possible.

The project M&E system should include information from sources other than those directly generated by the project staff. Activities are usually tracked through project accounting, the MIS system or specific parts of the M&E system.

The logframe can be used to systematically identify and appropriate MoV for each indicator chosen. The following questions may assist in the identification of the appropriate MoV.

- How should the information be collected? e.g., sample surveys, administrative records, national statistics (as in the census), workshops, focus groups, observation, PLA (participatory learning and action) methods (e.g., participatory mapping, Venn diagram, matrix ranking). Also, stories can give a meaningful picture of a situation.
- What source is most appropriate? e.g., Who should be interviewed? Does the Bureau of Statistics already collect the required information? Is the source reliable and representative?
- Who should do it? e.g., extension staff, service providers, project management, an independent team?
- When and how often should the information be collected, analysed and reported? e.g., monthly, annually, according to seasonal cropping cycles?

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal: To achieve sustainable and equitable poverty reduction and improve the quality of life of the disadvantaged rural households in targeted areas	No. of households with improved household asset index** % reduction in prevalence of child malnutrition** Reduction in the proportion of households living below the poverty line	Impact surveys (RIMS survey) DoA and DoH statistics	Continued and sufficient market demand Benefits not offset by disruption of political and civil stability
Development Objective: To improve income-generating and livelihood opportunities for 50,000 poor rural households in targeted areas	% of households reporting increased income No. of households with improved food security % of targeted households engaged in new income-generating activities	Periodic household surveys DoA statistics on income and expenditure	Sufficient market demand and adequate price Increase in availability of social services not undermined by population growth
Outcome 1: To increase agricultural production and productivity	% increase in agricultural production	Project records Records from trainers	Sufficient rain
Outputs 1.1 Farmers trained 1.2 Demonstration held 1.3 Irrigation infrastructure constructed	No. of people trained by type and gender No. of demonstrations held on farmers' land No. of irrigation schemes rehabilitated/reconstructed		

The results chain

Tips in formulating the logframe

Objective statements in the results hierarchy (goal, development objective, outcomes and outputs) should be written in future complete language.

Objective statements should not include the words 'through', 'by', 'via' or 'in order to' because such words refer to a different logical level.

The logframe should have only one development objective statement. Multiple development objectives diffuse project efforts and weaken the design.

Output statements should be written as management objectives which the project team can implement.

Risks should be managed as far as possible by changing the project design.

Indicators of behavioural change should only be used at the development objective and outcome levels. Indicators at the output level should relate to non-behavioural changes.

Indicators at the development objective level should be independent of outcomes and outputs (i.e., not a restatement). Likewise, indicators at the outcome level should not be a restatement of outputs.

Means of verification (MoV) should be specified precisely (e.g., if a survey or special type of official statistics source is needed, say so – do not just put 'progress reports' or 'Ministry of Agriculture').

Some considerations when using the logframe approach

Attribution *versus* contribution

When developing the logframe matrix, it is important to remember the point of attribution and contribution and what your project will be held responsible for at the end. Any project has a sphere over which it has direct control (e.g., outputs), a sphere that can be influenced (e.g., development objective), and a sphere of concern (impact level) that is determined by a set of factors that may not be related to the project itself. While the project will be held accountable for producing stated outputs and achieving the development objective, it will contribute but not be accountable to achieving the overall goal.

Some challenges

- The logframe resembles the logic and a linear structured thinking. It does not capture and accommodate complexity that is often part of our development projects' reality. The use of logframe therefore needs to be complemented with other tools to measure and analyse progress in a way that can help management address the additional complexities.
- The formulation of indicators for the outcomes section is difficult within the logframe approach and template, often because the logframe is not actor-oriented and because outcomes have a qualitative

aspect that is more difficult to measure. Qualitative tools are described in this compilation, and an accompanying paper on the use of Outcome Target Indicator Plan facilitates the specification of actor-oriented outcomes.

- One key challenge in developing a logframe is to undertake the technical work earlier described in a participatory way, as suggested for the problem and objective trees indicated at the beginning of this article. This can be done by explaining the tool to stakeholders and advancing as much as possible with the group's participation. However, once stakeholder inputs are understood and key agreements reached, some of the technical fine-tuning of the logframe (to meet the specifications and standards already set) is best done within the project team. Opportunities to present these to the stakeholders during a future design, start-up or annual review event should be used to re-confirm the logframe and ensure that all participants are aware of the targets set, the measures to be used and the methods proposed for data collection.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ASmart	Agreed and specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoH	Department of Health
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
Logframe	Logical Framework
MIS	management information system
MoV	Means of Verification
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OVI	objectively verifiable indicators
PLA	participatory learning and action
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
PY2	project year 2
QQT	quantity, quality and time
RB-COSOP	Results-based Country Strategic Options Paper
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SMART	specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely
VDC	village development committee

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Specifying Outcomes with the Outcome Target Indicator Plan



Introduction

The Outcome Target Indicator Plan (OTIP) is a tool that helps development professionals to clarify and strengthen the stated outcomes that a project is aiming for. Using a simple table, practitioners develop outcome indicators that include the specific changes they want to see, in whom, by when and how they will measure it.

OTIP is used during the development of the logframe when specifying the outcome and development objective levels. These levels of the logframe are the most important. They describe important changes that are the first indications of project impact targets. Yet, it can be challenging to articulate these changes in well-formulated outcome statements and devise indicators to measure them.

Figure 1. Results Levels in IFAD's Logframe

OTIP is used
to specify
the outcome
levels in the
logframe

Goal	<p>The highest-level change to which the project can reasonably be expected to contribute, and is a consequence of achievement of the development objective. The goal should relate to a specific national development target (e.g., as spelled out in the PRSP).</p>	<p>WHY? Why will we do this project?</p>
Development objective	<p>The end-result of the project if all goes as planned (usually expressed as a sustainable impact on a target group or institution). It is a change that is logically expected to occur once one or more outcomes have been realized. The development objective is usually achieved by the end of project implementation.</p>	<p>WHAT? What are the expected changes in learning, actions or institutions as a result of the project?</p>
Outcomes	<p>The end-result of the project if all goes as planned (usually expressed as a sustainable impact on a target group or institution). It is a change that is logically expected to occur once one or more outcomes have been realized. The development objective is usually achieved by the end of project implementation.</p>	
Outputs	<p>Direct products or services that the project will deliver and for which the project management team can be held accountable.</p>	<p>WHAT? What products and services will the project team deliver in order to achieve the outcomes and development objective?</p>

History

IFAD's Outcome Target Indicator Plan is adapted from monitoring and evaluation (M&E) materials developed by the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food. The Challenge Program's M&E system is strongly influenced by a project planning and M&E approach called Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA).

It is based on the use of an Outcome Logic Model that aims to make explicit the project's theory of change. While similar to IFAD's logframe, the Outcome Logic Model is specifically focused on describing how the development and use of outputs are expected to produce developmental outcomes. It is used to specify how the use of outputs will create desired changes in practice, behaviors, knowledge, attitude and skills.

As part of the development of the project's Outcome Logic Model, the Challenge Program uses the Outcome Target, Indicator and Baseline (OTIB) Plan to indicate project outcomes (desired changes), be as specific as they can about what those changes will be, and then describe how they will measure their contribution to making the changes happen.

This tool has been adapted by IFAD for use during the development of the outcome levels of the logframe because it is a simple and effective system to clearly articulate a programme's intended changes in actors and how those changes will be measured.

The OTIP Format

A five-column table is used to record information for each project outcome. Once completed, some of the information from OTIP can be transferred to the project logframe.

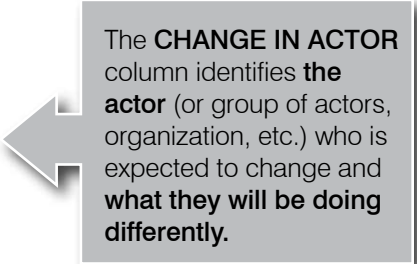
The columns include:

1. **Change in actor** – which describes the **actor group and specific change** in practice, knowledge, attitude or skills;
2. **Outcome targets** – which describes **who and how many** the programme expects to change and **by how much** by the end of the programme;
3. **Outcome indicators** – which details the **evidence that you will observe and measure** to tell you what progress is being made toward outcome targets;
4. **Measurement tools** – which identifies the **instruments and methods** used to observe and measure progress toward outcome targets; and
5. **Baseline** – which describes how the programme will establish **the starting conditions** against which progress will be measured.

Filling out OTIP

The table is filled in from left to right with each cell building on the information from the previous ones.

1. Change in Actor

Change in Actor	Outcome Targets	Indicators	Measurement Tools	Baseline
Farmers work collectively in marketing their produce to higher-end markets				

In this example, *farmers* are the actors and the change is that they will *work collectively* to market their produce.

It can be helpful to refer to the outputs the project will deliver and ask, “What will this actor be doing differently when they use the output?” A more general starting point is. “If this project is successful, WHO will change? What groups of people or organizations will be affected?”

The **change** usually refers to a change in practice, knowledge, attitude, or skills.


A change in practice (or behavior) is a change in the way people (the “actors” you just identified) DO things. So here, try to use action words such as use, coordinate, plan, participate in, integrate, etc.

Changes in knowledge, attitude and skills are often necessary prior to changing a practice. In order to “use” something, people usually need to first know what it is and understand its advantages.

They may also need to have the skills to use it or at least believe or trust in the benefits of using it. Look at your practice change to assess whether there are key changes in knowledge, attitude or skills that are also necessary.


Achievement of project objective by a project normally reflects an opportunity to improve outcomes for the target group or in the environment in which they operate. In practical terms, this is embodied in a change in practice or knowledge/attitude/skills for relevant actors (the target group, or the service delivery system that influence the target group’s outcomes). The change needs to be further specified into a target outcome, which the project outputs seek to secure. As such, the outcome target goes beyond the description of the type of change and specifies the result that is sought by the project outputs.

2. Outcome Targets

Change in Actor	Outcome Targets	Indicators	Measurement Tools	Baseline
Farmers work collectively in marketing their produce to higher-end markets	800 farmer households (5600 persons) have higher value of agricultural sales by the end of the programme	 <p>The OUTCOME TARGETS column shows how much or how many actors should change and includes a timeframe by which the change should occur.</p>		

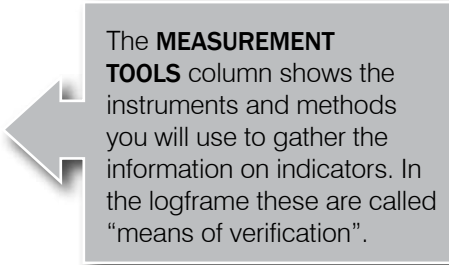
Try to be as specific as possible about the actor groups. If you have their actual names or locations, use them here.

3. Indicators

Change in Actor	Outcome Targets	Indicators	Measurement Tools	Baseline
Farmers work collectively in marketing their produce to higher-end markets	800 farmer households (5600 persons) have higher value of agricultural sales by the end of the programme	Increase in cooperative sales & increase in sales per participating farmer for at least 800 farmer households	 <p>The INDICATORS column shows the evidence you will use to show the change along with the specific actor and targets (from the first 2 columns) to construct an outcome target indicator. should occur.</p>	

Indicators are not always direct measurements. In this example, a proxy indicator would provide the best evidence that the outcome target, increasing value of agricultural sales, is fulfilled. Because higher agricultural sales are expected to be led by collective marketing through farmers' cooperative, increases in cooperative sales suggest whether agricultural sales are, in fact, increasing. Cooperative sales provide an insight into changes in sales by member farmers that is consolidated and that normally routinely recorded - and therefore easier to measure than individual (sometimes informal and unrecorded) farm sales.

4. Measurement Tools

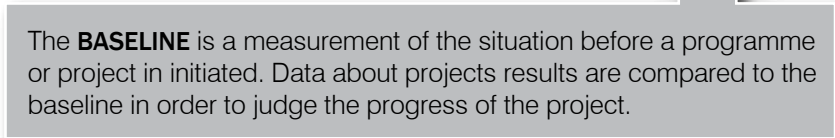
Change in Actor	Outcome Targets	Indicators	Measurement Tools	Baseline
Farmers work collectively in marketing their produce to higher-end markets	800 farmer households (5600 persons) have higher value of agricultural sales by the end of the programme	Increase in cooperative sales & increase in sales per participating farmer for at least 800 farmer households	Coop sales records, disaggregated by farmer household (and by men/women)	

It is not always necessary to directly gather the data for an indicator. In many cases it is possible to use secondary sources of verification, including records from service providers or data available from government agencies or international organizations.

When data does need to be gathered directly, project staff should identify the tools they will use to do so. Because outcomes are complex, this will often include a mix of both quantitative methods, like surveys, and qualitative methods such as interviews, groups discussions or story collection.

5. Baseline

Change in Actor	Outcome Targets	Indicators	Measurement Tools	Baseline
Farmers work collectively in marketing their produce to higher-end markets	800 farmer households (5600 persons) have higher value of agricultural sales by the end of the programme	Increase in cooperative sales & increase in sales per participating farmer for at least 800 farmer households	Coop sales records, disaggregated by farmer household (and by men/women)	Coop sales records before project start provides first data point (monitored annually)



The **BASELINE** is a measurement of the situation before a programme or project is initiated. Data about projects results are compared to the baseline in order to judge the progress of the project.

In the example, the baseline will be collected from the records generated before the project is already underway. It is important to remember that not all indicators will require measuring a baseline, since some may have a starting point of zero.

Using OTIP information

Adjust Outcome Statements

While OTIP is designed to specify outcome indicators, in practice, it is also useful to specify the development objective and outcome statements. Once OTIP has been completed, it is useful to check the original outcome statements to ensure that they clearly reflect the CHANGE in actor and the OUTCOME TARGETS that were specified in the OTIP table. If necessary, change the outcome statements to reflect the contents of those columns.

OTIP can also be used to write a clear outcome statement. To do this, combine columns one and two to devise a statement that includes the actor, change desired, and targets.

For example, combining columns one and two of the example used in this paper:

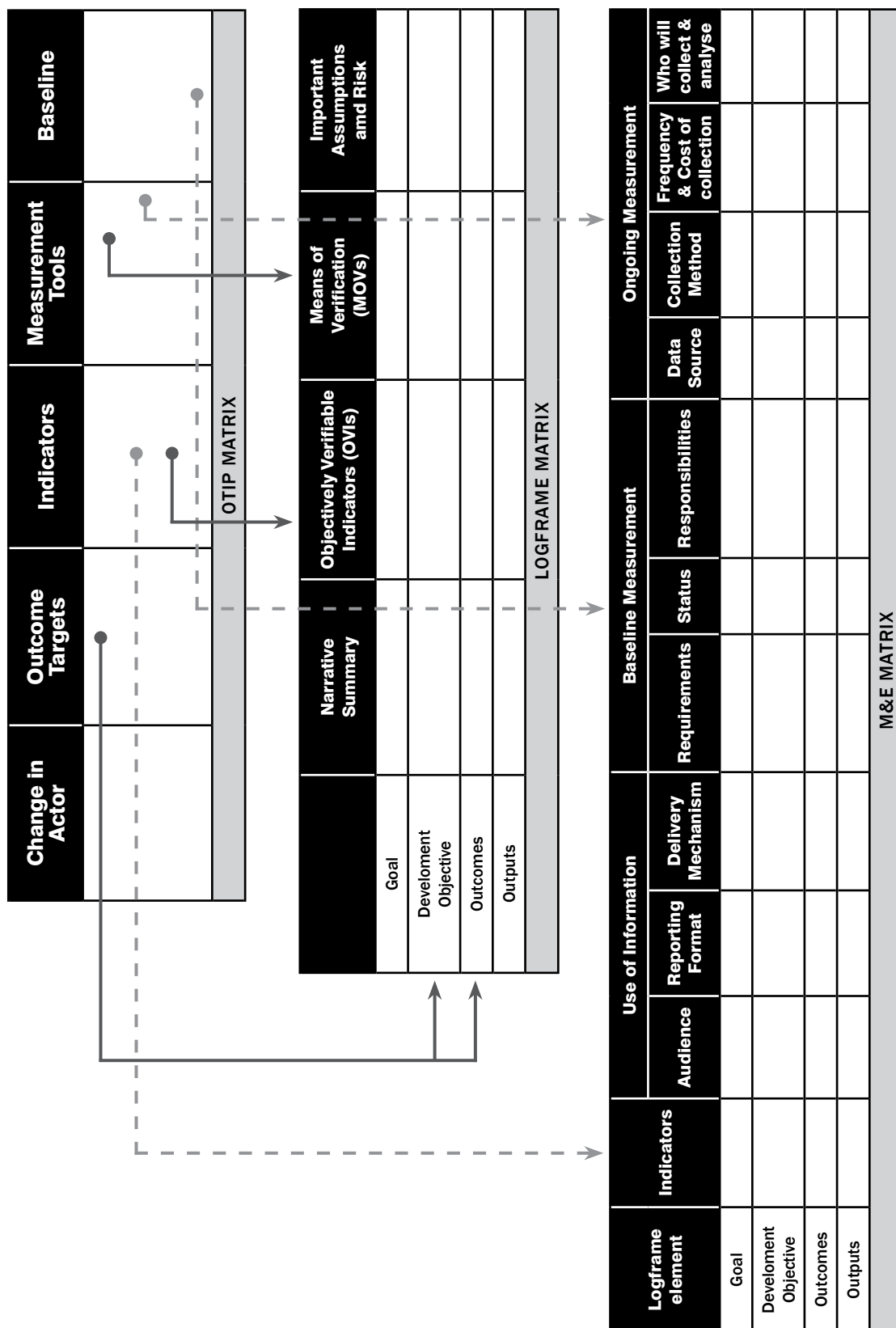
Change in Actor	Outcome Targets
Farmers work collectively in marketing their produce to higher-end markets	800 farmer households (5600 persons) have higher value of agricultural sales by the end of the programme

Might produce an outcome statement such as:

800 farmer households (5600 persons) collectively market their produce to higher-end markets increasing the value of agricultural sales by the end of the programme.

Transfer Information to the Project Logframe

Once the OTIP table is filled out, the information from the *Outcome Target Indicator and Measurement Tools* columns are transferred to the equivalent columns in the logframe. Baseline information developed using OTIP can be transferred to the project's M&E Matrix.



Acronyms and abbreviations

M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OTIB	Outcome, Target, Indicator and Baseline Plan
OTIP	Outcome Target Indicator Plan
PIPA	Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis

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Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis wiki
<http://pipamethodology.pbworks.com/w/page/70283575/FrontPage>

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C INTEGRATING GENDER CONCERNS AND ENSURING INCLUSIVE M&E



Gender-Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation



Why gender-sensitive M&E?

Although women and men share livelihood in the same household, they have different roles and responsibilities as well as different access to resources, receiving varied types of support from other people. Thus, women and men often experience poverty differently. The needs and priorities of women and men are often not the same, and they face different constraints to overcoming poverty. Development interventions may affect women and men in different ways, and their perceptions of project interventions may differ because of their different priorities.

Is gender present in M&E systems of development projects?

Gender considerations are often absent from projects designs mainly due to

- Lack of participation by women in the initial need analyses and project design
- Lack of background and baseline data disaggregated by sex
- Lack of organisation's or project's gender policy or strategy
- Lack of projects gender-sensitive vision and objectives
- Lack of gender-sensitive logframe indicators
- Lack of understanding of what the project will deliver to address inequality

What benefits came from capturing gender differences within project M&E?

- Helps project implementers detect negative impact on women—for example, increased workload, incidents of violence or other forms of backlash and discriminatory attitudes toward women and girls (see Case 1: Changing gender division of labour)
- Addresses the constraints of women and men appropriately, thereby improving project performance and outcomes
- Helps assess whether both men and women are satisfied with the project and ensures that implementation does not make them feel that their needs are ignored (see Case 2: Resistance from men)
- Ensures that the project does not overlook gender differences in vulnerability, which could result in severe impacts on women (see Case 3: Differences in vulnerability)
- Identifies opportunities to empower women (improve their confidence, self esteem, build capacity of leadership and self-organisation) and identifies activities that contribute to women's' empowerment

What does gender-sensitive M&E do?

- Gender-sensitive M&E aims at assessing the project's effects and impacts (intended or unintended) on gender relations and women's empowerment.
- Specifically, it will monitor the changes in

- ♦ Gender division of labour and workload, including participation of household members in reproductive, economic and income-earning activities
 - ♦ Gender differences in access and control over resources (e.g., income, credit, employment, land, other assets) and services, (training, extension, etc.) and their share in benefits from access/control over resources and services
 - ♦ Gender differences in Information and knowledge
 - ♦ Decisionmaking patterns in the household and the community
 - ♦ Women's and men's perception/assessment of the project
 - ♦ Women and men's attitudes and self-confidence
 - ♦ Gender differences in vulnerability and coping strategies (e.g., differences in adjusting to external shock)
 - ♦ Signs/incidence of violence against women
 - ♦ Other aspects of gender relations
- Gender and M&E should not only collect data but should also
 - ♦ Analyse the reasons for these gender differences and any changes
 - ♦ Discuss the findings among the implementing team and women and men in the field
 - ♦ Develop appropriate and time-bound interventions or transformative actions, with a budget

Case 1: Changing gender division of labour

In Cambodia, women weave using a handmade loom. A simple mechanised weaving machine was introduced to improve the productivity of weaving. Once the machine was introduced, the weaving activity was taken over by men and the women became assistants of the men. By monitoring such changes in the gender division of labour, it would be possible to develop appropriate interventions, when such changes were not desired.

Case 2: Resistance from men

In an IFAD-funded project in India, it was found that men were disgruntled about the project because they felt that all the resources and attention were going to the women. They felt they were ignored and this resulted in resistance from men in the project area. Such differences in perceptions can affect project sustainability as men will be discouraged from continuing the activities.

Case 3: Differences in vulnerability

During the tsunami of 2004, many women and men died. However, women who lost their spouses were more likely to become destitute than men who lost their wives. In some societies, women are economically and socially dependent on their husbands and the loss of a woman's husband would deprive her of income and property. If the monitoring system counted the number of casualties in the household, rather than their sex and age, it will not be able to capture such vulnerability that women face.

How do we develop gender-sensitive M&E?

Stage 1 - Identification and preparation

- Ensure that the benchmark survey or baseline study is gender sensitive. Are there sex-disaggregated data? Have you done gender analysis been done? What are the gender issues that have been identified during the baseline?
- Conduct an initial stocktaking: Who are the key actors targeted by the project? What are their activities? What is their capacity? What are their roles and needs?
- Undertake an initial gender study or analysis to identify the opportunities and the potential negative impacts of project intervention on women as well as men, as well as potential area for transformation.

Stage 2 - Design and appraisal

- “Engender” the logical framework of the project. Ask:
 - ♦ Are indicators sex-disaggregated wherever possible?
 - ♦ Are the gender issues and potential areas for transformation identified included in the logical framework?
 - ♦ Have both quantitative and qualitative indicators been included?
 - ♦ Do the data collection methods rely only on household information? Do they also query individual women and men separately?
 - ♦ Have feedback loops and discussion forums been designed to share findings?

Stage 3 - Implementation

- Develop the capacity to integrate, monitor, interpret and evaluate gender-related issues.

DOs in gender and M&E

- Disaggregate all data by sex
- Ask both women and men
- Give importance to marginalised women's experience
- Train M&E officers and enumerators on gender-sensitive interview methods
- Develop a feedback loop to discuss the findings with the community. Since women's empowerment involves a process, learning processes for project implementers need to be constructed. Participating actors can reflect on results and learn from findings.

DON'Ts in gender and M&E

- Do not take the household as a unit of analysis. Remember that the many gender inequality incidents and deprivation happen within the household.
- Do not let a narrow project focus limit staff from understanding gender issues. Gender issues might lie outside the project framework but could have an important impact on project implementation and results.

- ♦ Are all M&E officers and enumerators trained on gender-sensitive data collection and analysis?
- ♦ Are gender officers involved in M&E?
- ♦ Is there an incentive/accountability/support system in place to conduct gender-sensitive M&E?
- Review the M&E questions (both for questionnaire and focus group discussion) to make sure that relevant points raised in section 2 above about M&E data are included.
- Collect gender-sensitive data based on the selected indicators.
 - ♦ Make sure that both women and men participate in the annual outcome survey and in RIMS household surveys.
 - ♦ Disaggregating by head of household is not enough, because if we interview only the head of household (who are often men), that will not capture the voices and perceptions of women in male-headed households. There is also the danger that, if the respondents in the household are not specified, we might end up talking only to women, if men are not available at home for interview. In both ways, taking household as a unit of analysis will introduce bias in terms of capturing respondents' experiences and perceptions.
- Select both women and men respondents during sampling. For example, if we decide to select 200 male-headed households, we should take 50% men and 50% women respondents or we need to make sure that at least 30% of the respondents are women and 30% are men. For the remaining 40%, we can interview either women or men.
- Make sure to note in the questionnaire who is interviewed, whether the respondent is a woman or a man, and what is her/his relationship with the head of the household. This will permit gender-disaggregated analysis later on.

Women and men live in the same household and work together and eat together. How can we differentiate impact on women and men?

We can record women and men's own perception by interviewing women and men in the household separately. We can do so by having two interviewers visit the house and conduct interviews simultaneously, but separately.

Other ways of investigating intra-household differences can be

- Asking for their time use (e.g. 24 hours description on what each one does on a typical day) - this will allow us to assess intra-household differences in workload.
- Assessing nutritional levels (malnutrition, anemia, etc.) - this will allow us to assess intra-household differences in food allocation.
- Assess control of resources- including expenditure patterns of each, and then their estimation of the other's expenditure - this will allow us to assess intra-household differences in income perceptions and in decision making.
- Ask for their perceptions. Perceptions give us an insight on how the impact is experienced differently by women and men.

- Train the enumerators so that they will be able to interview men and women appropriately. They might need to adjust their timing of interview and ways of asking questions when interviewing women/men. Enumerators should be trained not only on the interview questions but also on gender, gender relations, participatory methods and facilitation methods. Local political and cultural sensitivities may mean that enumerators are reluctant to ask questions about “difficult” or “culture-sensitive” issues. The importance of these questions should be explained, and enumerators should be encouraged to ask them, otherwise important details for analysis are lost.
- Instructions to enumerators should emphasise the need to ask probing questions and not simply to accept “yes” or “no” answers.
- In recruiting enumerators, efforts should be made to achieve a gender balance. Issues of age, ethnicity or caste may also be vital to consider in seeking to reduce the bias.
- Fine-tune the databases and data processing tools and make them appropriate for storing and analysing gender-related information.

Stage 4 - Analysis and reporting:

- During analysis, make sure that replies are differentiated by sex of participants, especially for perception and opinion-related questions.
- The report should address the outcomes and impact of gender integration in the overall context of the project.
- The report should address outcomes and impact of project interventions on men and women and gender relations.
- The report should include gender-differentiated results in reporting lessons learned from implementation.
- Gender impacts must not be put in one separate section. Gender issues must be discussed in each aspect of the report.
- The findings need to be discussed with the project officers concerned and field workers as part of the learning process and to provide feedback to next year’s planning.

What questions do we ask in gender-sensitive M&E?

The following questions address some aspects of gender issues in project work and could guide projects in designing their M&E plans and other M&E-related activities. However, the issues addressed here are not exhaustive and it is important to conduct a gender analysis in the project to identify the gender issues in the project area:

General questions

1. Are all collected data disaggregated by sex?
2. Does the project involve both women and men in M&E?
3. Are mechanisms in place to ensure that any negative impact of the project on women can be averted?
4. Has sufficient budget been allocated (if needed) to make the M&E exercises gender-sensitive (e.g., for hiring a gender expert for doing gender analysis and for preparing a gender-sensitive monitoring plan, and also for hiring women enumerators to interview women)?

Project objective, logframe and indicators:

1. Does the project have gender-responsive objective(s)?
2. What measures can verify achievement of the gender-responsive objective(s)?
3. What measures can verify whether project benefits accrue to women as well as to men and the different types of women engaged in or affected by the project?
4. Are the data for verifying the project's purpose sex-disaggregated and analysed in terms of gender? What gender analysis tools will be used (e.g., in rapid rural appraisal exercises or participatory field evaluations)?
5. Are gender issues adequately considered in project implementation (e.g., in work plans)?
6. What are the important external factors necessary for achieving the activities and especially ensuring the continued engagement of men and women participants in the project?

Table 1. Examples of indicators.

Strong gender dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Percentage change in the average number of income-generating activities managed by women ▪ Percentage of women participants who reported increased ownership of income generated from the income-generating activities they manage ▪ Percentage of community groups implementing gender equity affirmative action strategies ▪ Percentage change in income controlled by women and men within the targeted households
Weak gender dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of women and men farmers trained on tree nursery establishment ▪ Number of women using fuel-efficient stoves ▪ Number of women and men with increased income over the baseline ▪ Number of women and men accessing formal markets

NB Practical gender need versus strategic gender need

Empowerment

1. Does M&E assess whether women or men have been disadvantageded socially or economically? For example, will data be collected on changes in the gender division of labour and access to and control of resources (by socioeconomic group)?
2. Does M&E assess if women's (or men's) status improved because of programme inputs?
3. Does the project assess if there is improvement in awareness of women's rights?
4. Does the project assess if there is improvement in awareness issues of domestic violence and laws relating to these issues?

Land, agriculture and technology

1. What is the difference in women and men having official land titles?
2. What is the percentage increase of women having official title to land in comparison with men and the previous year?
3. What actions were taken to increase women's land ownership?
4. What is the difference between women's and men's agricultural practices and why?
5. How many women in comparison to men were reached with extension or new technology services, seed, tools and fertiliser support?
6. Are women reporting that their priorities were equitably reflected for the technology chosen?
7. Are women-headed households adopting improved technology components for improved technologies for crops or livestock?
8. Are women-headed households reporting an increase in profit from farming?
9. What is the number and position of women in agricultural production and marketing associations?

Income and credit

1. What are women's and men's income sources?
2. What is the difference between cash income of women and men and why?
3. Are women able to spend cash income on their needs? If not, why?
4. Are women of the household members of a self-help group/microcredit group?

5. Do all women, regardless of social and wealth status, have access to credit? If not, what are the constraints?
6. Does the bank credit policy favor women? Why?
7. What is the percentage increase in women having access to credit since the previous year?
8. Do women hold joint accounts with their husbands or hold an account in their own name?
9. What are women's average interest rate and loan amount compared with those for men?
10. How do women's and men's repayment rates compare?

Food security and nutrition

1. Does project policy involve women and men both in food security and nutrition programmes?
2. Are both men and women from the same household participating in discussions and training sessions on nutrition and food security?
3. Has improvement occurred in household food security and nutrition indicators (under-five malnutrition, wasting and stunting)?

Time and workload

1. Does M&E assess if women's or men's workload increased as a result of programme inputs?
2. Are women compensated enough for the time they put in project work or is their labour taken voluntarily?

Conclusion

Gender-sensitive M&E can help identify and track differences in project outcomes and impacts with respect to gender and can thereby help projects identify actions needed to correct discrepancies in project impact across genders. There are simple techniques for improving the quality of data so that it allows for adequate gender analysis, but in spite of their simplicity the benefits are substantial. Gender-sensitive M&E can improve the project's performance by maximising inclusive and equitable benefits to all members of the target group and will help avoid otherwise unforeseen negative impacts on different segments of the target group.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System

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Engendering M&E While a Project is Ongoing



The Rural Livelihood Improvement Project (RULIP) Cambodia is an IFAD-funded livelihood security project. RULIP is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) under the supervision of the RULIP Project Support Unit (PSU) in Phnom Penh. Facilitating Learning and Capacity Development (VBNK) provided support to the RULIP project staff in planning and implementing the annual outcome survey (AOS), and the introduction of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators in the survey.

The annual outcome survey—what and why

IFAD has developed a standard methodology – the Results and Impact Management System or RIMS for measuring *end-of-project* impact. However, RIMS does not provide regular or timely information that can be used to take corrective action *during* project implementation.

The annual outcome survey (AOS) is a tool for monitoring the performance of a project. More specifically, the AOS sets out to identify positive and negative changes at the household level to highlight evidence of where the project is achieving results and where it is lagging behind and to draw on the findings for designing corrective actions when required.

The need to reflect gender dimensions in the AOS

The project recognized the need to increase awareness and strengthen understanding of gender elements when assessing impact. The importance of collecting data on the situation of women who participated or indirectly benefited from project activities was noted. This involved, for example, understanding how decisions were made at the household level (related to such aspects as distribution of resources, how profits from sale of crops and livestock were used, participation of men and women in decision-making, etc.

Though data previously collected by project staff tended to provide information on activities and outputs, they did not adequately emphasize or probe gender-specific information. There were several reasons for this:

- The village extension workers who conducted the HH surveys did not have the adequate experience required to fully understand the survey questions. They also lacked the skills needed to ask open-ended questions or to probe for deeper information.
- Data were mainly collected from men as 'heads of households.' Their views were, thus, not always representative of the situation of women.
- The survey did not contain especially designed questions and subquestions to assess the impact on women.

In RULIP, the AOS is conducted beginning in Year 2 of implementation. It uses a simple household (HH) survey that project staff and extension workers conduct to obtain data from a small but representative sample of beneficiaries. It is conducted during the first quarter of the year. This period (January–March) coincides with the off-season when farmers have more time to participate in the surveys.

The HH survey focuses on quantitative data (e.g., the number of women participating in training, the percentage of HH that have adopted new farming techniques, the percentage of female-headed HHs that have increased profit, or the number of HHs that took out a loan to improve their farming practices). The findings from the HH survey are complemented by qualitative data that provide more in-depth explanations about “meanings” –i.e., why and how some outcomes were or were not achieved.

In response, it was decided that the following had to be done:

1. Review and revise the project logframe and add gender-sensitive indicators.
2. Ensure that gender indicators are adequately reflected in the M&E plan.
3. Update the HH survey tool to align it with the revised logframe.
4. Provide capacity building to project staff on quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies (especially on the gender-sensitive approach to M&E).

The processes

1. Review of logframe

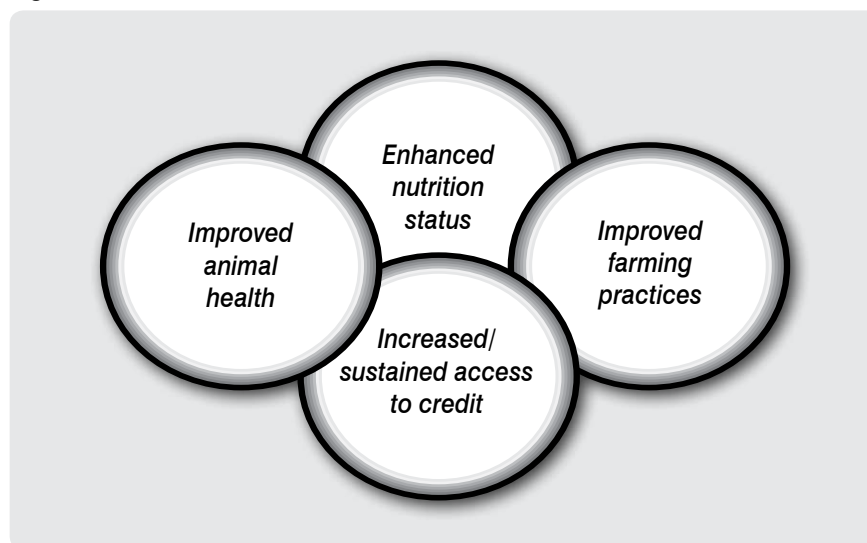
An early step involved working with the PSU staff to review and update the logframe by adding more gender-specific indicators. MAFF and PSU staff were also interested in adding new indicators and disaggregating data according to sex. As the team worked on the logframe, they also began to adjust the HH survey form. It was soon realised, however, that the logframe was becoming more complex and the HH survey form was becoming very long. Adding new indicators and expanding the HH survey seemed to make the tool complicated and more difficult to use.

Fortunately, IFAD project staff and a visiting consultant were able to provide help by stripping down the details in the logframe (fewer items) without losing the programme logic. It was accomplished by developing four separate results chains, outlining the reasoning behind each of the four components (see <http://asia.ifad.org/web/rulip/resources>).

VBNK had been using results chains in its work to evaluate its learning services. The results chain included the 'use of outputs', an idea that was also introduced to RULIP. The focus on 'use of outputs' helped staff see the relationship between what they do in their job and the influence it has on the desired results. Focusing on how individuals, teams and organisations apply their learning has been of particular value in closing the gap of what is often a big jump between output and outcome, a grey area generally relying on assumptions and attribution.

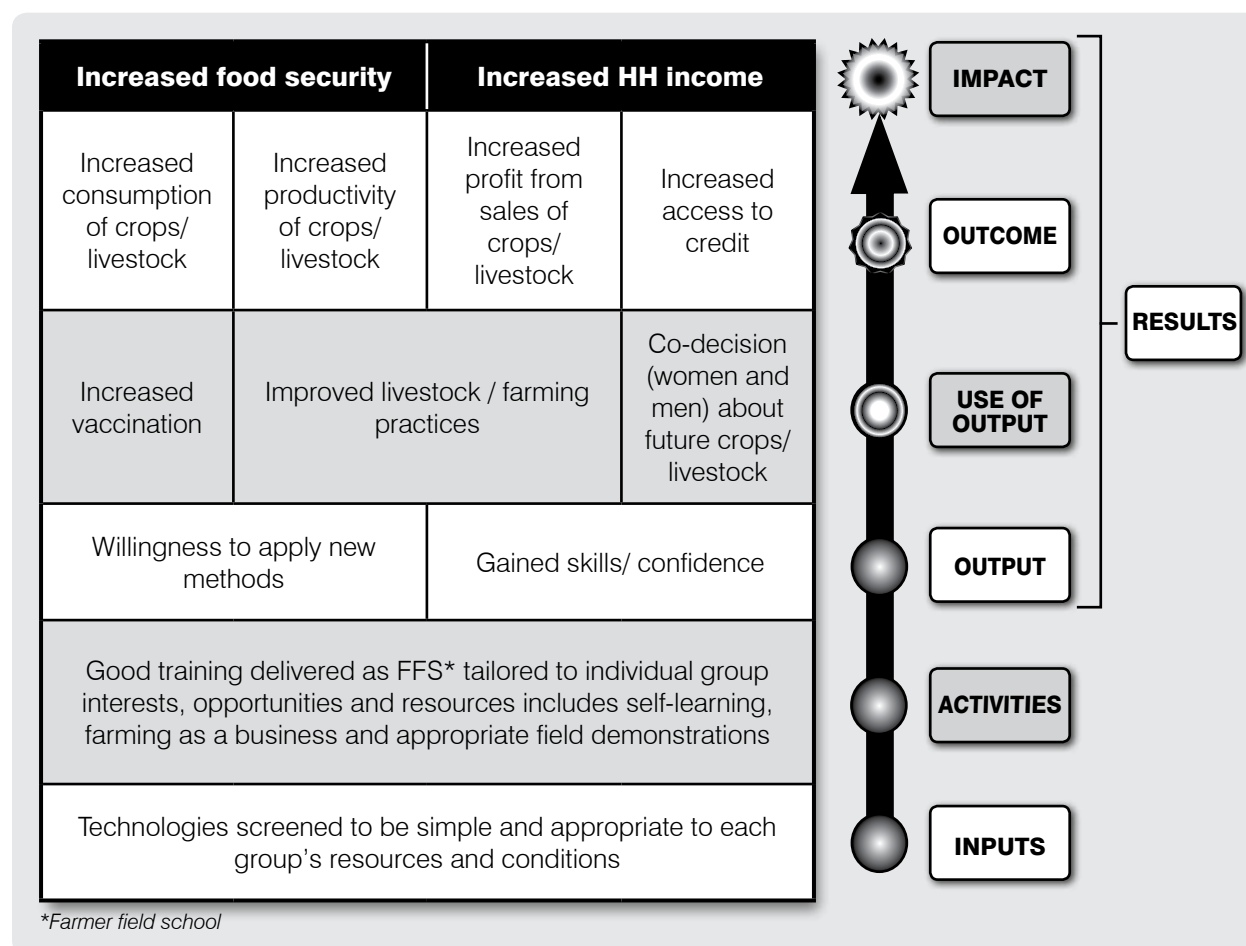
In summary, the RULIP project is built around four interconnected results chains. These relate to four outcome areas shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Four outcome areas.



One of the RULIP results chains – improved farming practice – is shown here as an example to illustrate logic and causal relations (Fig. 2).

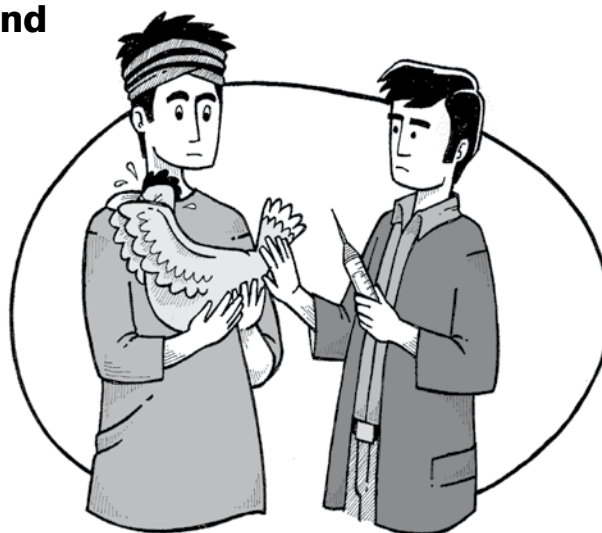
Figure 2. A RULIP results chain.



2. Finalising the HH survey form and qualitative interview guidelines

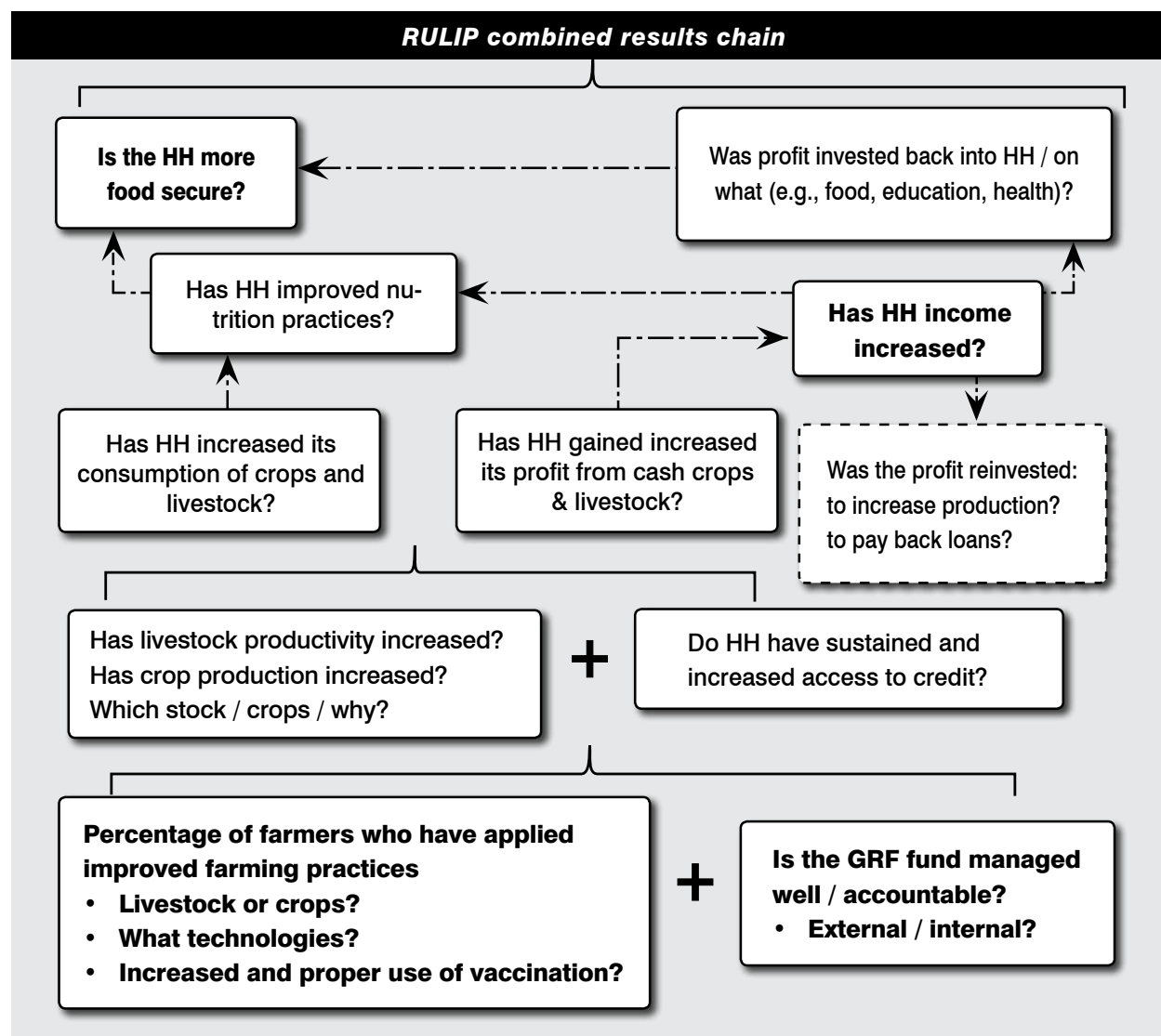
Once agreement was reached on the final results chain logic and the logframe was adjusted, the team was able to finalise the HH survey form. The results chain allowed the team to probe and ask the 'so what' question:

- What did you do after the training?
- Did you use the techniques introduced in the training? How?
- So what – Is there a noticeable increase in production? How much?



The team also decided to combine the four results chains into one visual to show how the different components linked with each other and contributed to HH income and food security (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. RULIP combined and results chain



In so doing, the team identified the expected outcomes and outputs as questions:

- Food security** : *Is the household more food secure?*
- Improvement in nutrition** : *Did the women and men adopt improved nutrition practices? How?*
- Increased income** : *Has household income increased compared with previous year?
How was the increased income used (by women/men)?*

These questions laid the foundation for the AOS.



3. The M&E Plan

The team then developed an M&E plan that provided guidelines in organising the M&E activities. To ensure consistency and to reinforce learning, the results chain was used to illustrate what needed to occur.

The starting point for developing the M&E plan is to identify performance questions that are linked to project objectives in the revised logframe and the four results chains (Table 1). A gender-sensitive M&E plan took into consideration the differences between women and men: how the data will be collected from women and men, who will collect the data, how will gender-sensitive data be collected, how will the data be analysed, etc? A gender-sensitive questionnaire was designed. It was decided that female enumerators would interview women, and male enumerators would interview men. The enumerators' training included sessions on how to conduct surveys in a gender-sensitive way and how to ask certain culturally sensitive questions to women.

The M&E plan defines the data to be collected (and the methods and tools to be used), identifies the persons responsible for primary data collection and data analysis and determines the frequency of data collection. The plan also includes data-gathering tools, record templates and survey questionnaires.

Table 1. Example of performance questions used to analyse the HH survey data in 2012.

Project level impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the HH more food secure? Has there been profitable investment in HH livelihood (desegregate by gender) and/or reinvestment in production? Has the loan been repaid? Has HH income increased? 	What data do you have to support your conclusions?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have women and men adopted improved nutrition practices (change in volume of food and/or type of food, food supplements for children, etc.)? Why? Has the HH increased its consumption of the crops and livestock produced? Has the HH increased profitability from cash crops and livestock? Has livestock or crop productivity increased? Which livestock / crops and why? Do HH enjoy sustained and increased access to credit? 	<p>Are there any variations between direct + indirect beneficiaries?</p> <p>Are men and women getting equitable benefits?</p> <p>Are there any differences in responses from men and women? Why?</p>
Use of outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have women and men farmers applied improved farming practices (which livestock or crops; which technologies; increased/proper use of vaccination)? Are women and men farmers making use of extension services? Is the GRF fund managed well (strong external accountability and strong internal management)? Does it provide benefits equally to women and men? 	Are there any variations between Khmer and ethnic minority households?
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What linkages are made between the services and training provided by the project and the results? 	
Activities		
Inputs		

In addition, there is a second set of performance objectives that ask the following questions:

- Has the project reached the target group? And have they benefited?
- Are the benefits being distributed in an equitable manner?
 - Have women and men both participated and benefited (e.g., equitable distribution of food and/or income). Are women participating in decisionmaking?
 - Have ethnic minorities participated and benefited? Are there sociocultural barriers that are limiting access to benefits?

- Would benefits have occurred even without the project? (attribution)
- Will the benefits be sustained beyond the life of the project?
- Are there environmental consequences? (positive or negative)



- Has the project had a wider policy or institutional impact?
- Are the logframe assumptions valid (risks avoided)?

4. Qualitative research tools (spider web methodology)

The research questions (in Table 1) were used to develop qualitative research tools to augment the household survey. The 'spider web' method was used to collect qualitative data. This is a simple, participatory approach that can be used with small groups of people with similar interests (e.g., a farmers' vegetable cooperative, female-headed HHs in a minority community). The spider web allows a project team to evaluate participant perceptions about what is working and what is not working, and why. It also allows the team to distinguish between differing perceptions (where people agree and where they do not agree, and why).

The first example (Fig. 4) shows how the spider web can be used to map how well the project is performing in different areas (domains of change). In this case, the question is 'How well do you believe the project is doing in terms of these domains related to gender?' The second example (Fig. 5) shows how performance questions are used to learn more about gender and nutrition.

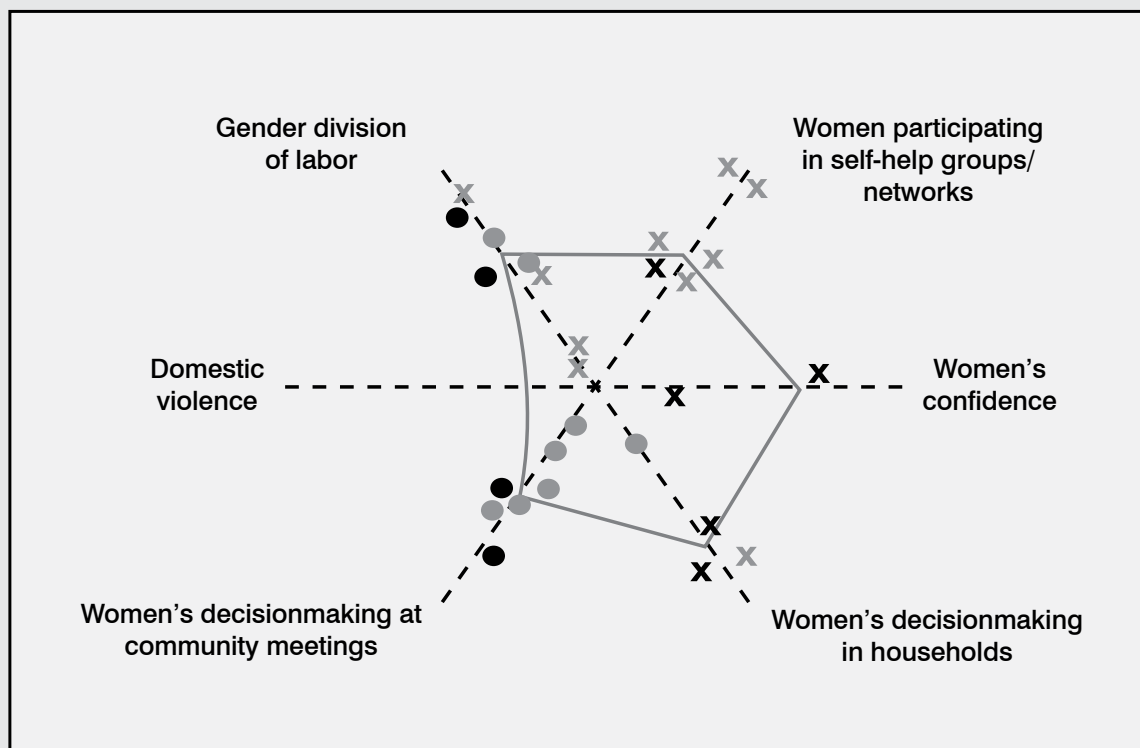


Figure 4. Spider web on project performance.

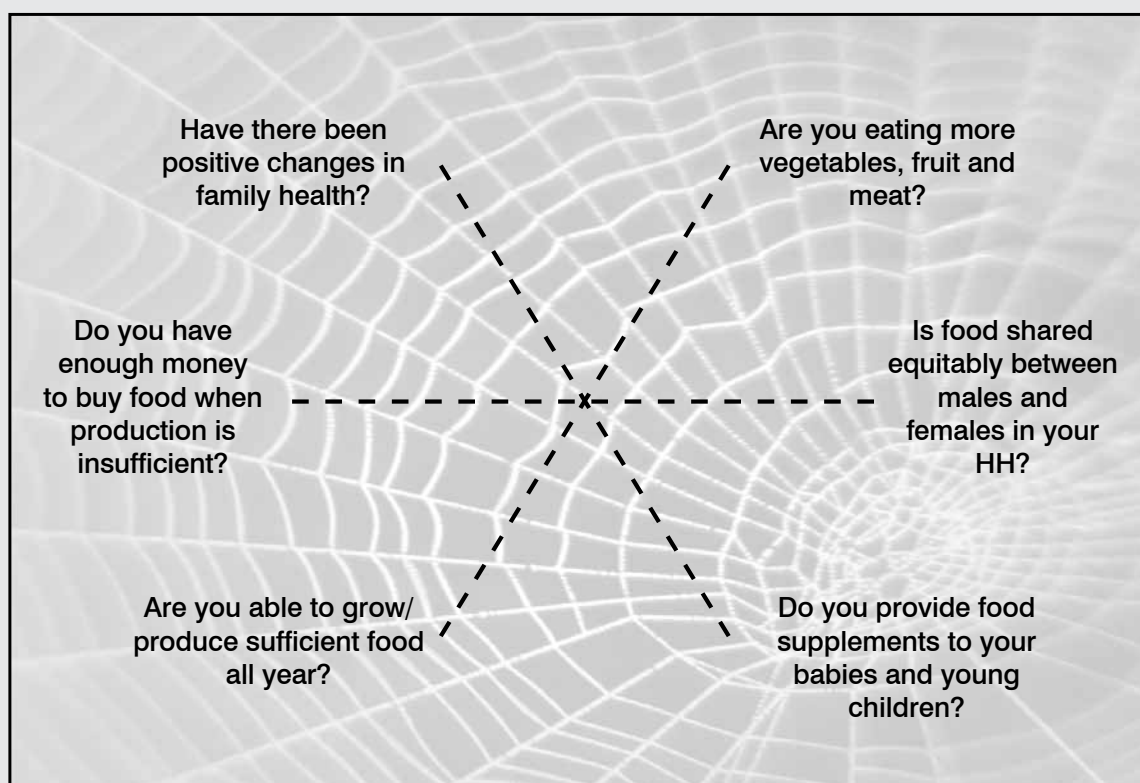


Figure 5. Performance questions on nutrition.

Lessons learned

- Rich gender-desegregated data can be obtained through qualitative interviews.
- The 2012 AOS has shown the project being able to demonstrate outcome-level results, but that linkages across the different levels of the results chains are not always explicit, particularly at the higher levels. This is due in part to the limitations of the HH survey methodology and the lack of precision in the HH survey questionnaires.
- To improve data validity, cultural factors should be given adequate consideration. For example, respondents may give answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear or may not want to report on something that frames them in a negative way ('saving face'). More qualitative data are needed to offset these shortcomings.

Conclusion

Using a results chain approach throughout the whole process—from design of the HH survey form to developing change domains for use with qualitative tools like the 'spider web'—helped the project staff understand and evaluate the interconnectedness of the various components of RULIP in Cambodia. This, in turn, increased their understanding of the questions in the quantitative HH survey and qualitative research formats, and how to properly use them. The introduction of gender-sensitive M&E indicators and gender-specific questions helped the project to explore and better understand the gender-differentiated impacts of RULIP. The results chain approach also guided the analysis of the data and the integration of findings into the AOS report.

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For descriptions of how spider webs (sometimes called spider grams) are used, please see:

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The RULIP project in Cambodia: <http://asia.ifad.org/web/rulip/about>

Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	annual outcome survey
GRF	Group Revolving Fund
HH	household
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PSU	Project Support Unit
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RULIP	Rural Livelihood Improvement Project
VBNK	Facilitating Learning and Capacity Development

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Mr. Vanly Virya has eighteen years experience in the social development sector in Cambodia. He has an MBA degree and is an accredited member (for professionalism and integrity in brokering multi-sector partnership for sustainable development) of the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme, UK. He has also been involved in a UNDP/CDC Government-Donor partnership initiative. Virya provided oversight and management support on the design and delivery of the recently completed Implementation of Consultancy and Coaching Programme on Gender Process Monitoring & Annual Outcome Survey for the RULIP Project. He has worked

with international consultants conducting evaluations of the Paris Declaration (PD) and the Victim support unit of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. He has been a key person leading the VBNK annual impact assessment study.

Case-Based Gender Process Monitoring



The challenge of institutionalising gender monitoring

Institutionalising gender elements in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is plagued by numerous problems. First, gender analysis frameworks are yet to be fully integrated into project planning. Often, gender indicators are not defined at the beginning of the project, and the government stakeholders and other project partners are resistant to add gender objectives once implementation has started. Also, sometimes, project staff do not have the adequate capacity to develop the indicators.

Second, taking measurements is problematic. Gender relations are extremely difficult to quantify, and changes in gender relations take a long time (sometimes generations) to become visible. More sensitive indicators are needed to capture subtle potentials for change. It is especially difficult to quantify such subtle changes, and the figures might not show changes in gender relations within the life of the project.

The only way to capture these subtle impacts is through qualitative descriptions, which unfortunately are often not gathered because it is difficult to assess their measurements.

The third problem is related to the capacity of the project staff. They need to be skilled in gender analysis, understanding gender relations and how gender differences affect and impact project results. It is also important that they have good facilitation skills to encourage women to express their voices. Hence, institutionalisation of gender monitoring needs to have a strong capacity building component to foster gender analysis skills.

The fourth problem is that important gender issues might lie outside a project's framework. Women's needs might not be easily detectable in the initial stage of the project. Monitoring must have a wide scope in order to capture needs that might have been overlooked.

The case-based gender process monitoring scheme is a way to overcome some of the difficulties in highlighting gender aspects in project monitoring. It relies on collection and discussion of stories from the field, aimed at both monitoring gender-based impact and improving the gender analysis capacity of the project staff. The case-based gender process monitoring scheme builds on Mosse's (2001) process monitoring and the 'most significant change' technique of Davies and Dart (2005). This article is based on the article 'Case-based Gender Process Monitoring', published in 'Reflecting on Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation', UN-Women, 2012.

Integration with the M&E system

Case-based gender monitoring complements established standard M&E process. The reports of case-based monitoring can be used as a 'means of verification' in the project logframe. This tool can be included in M&E plan to collect information on the progress of gender mainstreaming in the project. Gender issues can be included during the project review or midterm evaluation in order to introduce necessary revisions into the project framework.

The process of case-based gender Process Monitoring



Figure 1. Steps in the case-based monitoring process.

Step 1: Selection of key domains of change

The process of case-based gender process monitoring starts with the selection of related key domains of change that will be measured. Looking at too many domains makes it difficult to collect stories, so it is better to initially select and focus on three to five domains.

Step 2: District level meetings at the to discuss key domains of change

Before field-level staff and/or community focal points collect these stories, the staff attend a meeting where they are introduced to the methodology, covering the process of case-based monitoring, the method of collecting cases and the advantages of this technique. By involving the field-level staff and the community-level participants as story collectors, the rapport of core project staff with the local community is strengthened, enabling the institutionalisation of memories.



Step 3: Collection of stories

One 'happy' story and one 'sad' story for each of the key domains of change are collected each month per district. The definition of 'happy' and 'sad' is left to the story collectors. The happy/sad distinction does not have to be connected to the project intervention; any positive or negative changes in the women's lives need to be recorded in order to capture a holistic picture of the women's situation in the community and household.

Step 4: Sharing of stories

The stories are brought together at the district level for sharing and discussion. Selected stories are verbally told by the story collectors, followed by a group discussion:

- What is 'happy' (or 'sad') about this story? And why do we feel that this story is 'happy' (or 'sad')?
- Why did it happen like this?
- Have you seen similar stories in your area?
- What are the desired changes?
- How can we bring about that change? Can the project play a role in changing the situation? How?

The role of facilitator is very important at this meeting. The facilitator will pose the questions and lead the participants/story collectors in an exploratory analysis of the stories from a gender perspective. Therefore, district-level facilitators need to be well trained in gender analysis and facilitation. The story collection and the discussion/reflection are not only an information collection tool but also a capacity-building opportunity.

Step 5: Reporting

The district project coordinator reports monthly to the provincial department of agriculture. The report comprises the following documents:

- Output indicators of project achievements during the past month, in light of the plan of activities for that month.
- List of stories that have been collected during the month, including a brief summary of each case.
- Minutes of the monthly meeting, outlining the result of discussion among the field staff from the commune and district levels.
- Issues of concern for implementation of the project during the past month.
- Recommendations/suggestions for adjusting or strengthening the approach.

Piloting case-based monitoring

The case-based gender process monitoring was piloted in an IFAD-supported Rural Livelihood Improvement Project (RULIP) in Cambodia in 2012.



Selecting key domains of change

First, a review of the logframe was conducted to introduce appropriate gender impact indicators. Key domains were selected in a participatory way involving project staff and women and men beneficiaries from the communities. RULIP is implemented in three provinces, and each province selected different domains of change.

Discussing key domains of change

The selected key domains of change were then discussed with the project staff from both district and commune levels.

Assigning story collectors and story-collecting schedule

The story collectors are the project staff at the commune level (CEW and CWCFFP). They received a one-day introduction on domains of change and how to observe gender-based issues in the community.

They did not receive extensive training on interviewing skills or case writing because they will not write case reports but will only describe the cases verbally at the district meeting.

Key domains of change in Preah Vihear Province

- Changes in gender division of labour
- Domestic violence
- Children's access to school (boys and girls)
- Women's decisionmaking
- Women's participation in village meetings and sharing of ideas
- Women's confidence level
- Women's access to agricultural knowledge
- Women's network and mutual help
- Women's access to resources
- Women's participation in extension services

The story collector was instructed to seek out stories where:

- One of the key domains of change is present.
- It is clearly either a 'happy' case or a 'sad' case. The 'happy case' is an example of a gender-based improvement in the household. The sad case does not necessarily have to be a tragedy; rather, it is a case where there is some room for improvement.
- The cases should be collected among not only project beneficiaries but also among non-beneficiary households to show some relevant stories for gender relations in the community.



Sharing stories

The purpose of the discussion is for all the participants to reflect on the gender domains in the project area, thus improving their understanding in identifying gender issues and how desired changes can be brought in those domains. During the monthly meeting at the district level, the story collectors verbally present the cases. The stories and the discussion are recorded by a note taker. The process follows the following structure:

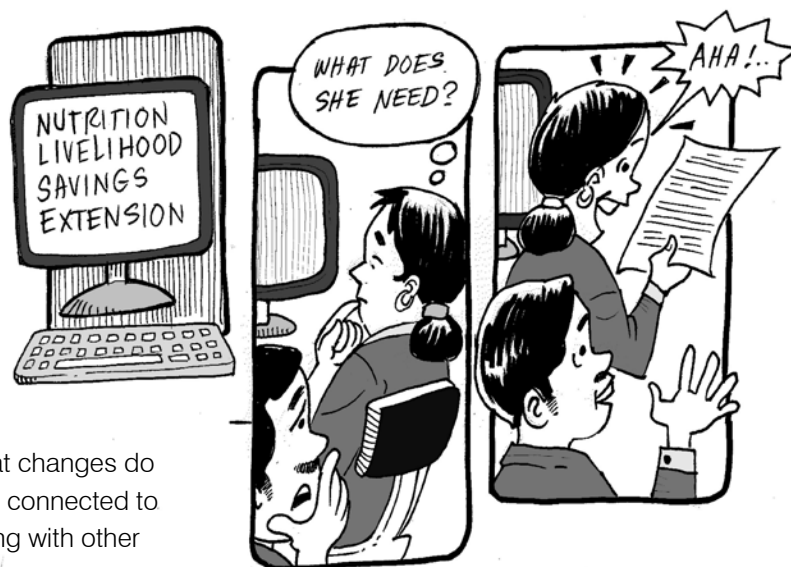
- First, the story collector tells the story.
- Then other participants ask questions to clarify details about the case. The participants are the project staff at the district and commune levels: commune extension workers, district agronomy officer, district extension officer, district gender focal point, commune women and children focal point, and commune council, etc. The discussion is oriented around the following points:

Discussion for 'happy' story:

- ♦ What is the domain of change for the story?
- ♦ Why is this story happy? What were the observed positive changes?
- ♦ How did this change happen? (both project-and non-project-related factors)
- ♦ How did the project help? (Which factors are connected to the project's support?)

Discussion for 'sad' story:

- ♦ What is the domain of change for the story?
- ♦ Why is this story sad? Is there no perceived change or is the situation getting worse?
- ♦ Why is there no change or why is it getting worse? (both project-and non-project-related factors)
- ♦ What can the project do? (What changes do you want to see? How are they connected to project activities—e.g., partnering with other organisations?)



- In order to validate the findings of the case observation, other participants are also asked to contribute if they know of similar stories from their areas. If such stories are shared, a broader discussion among the team is initiated on the reasons behind the observed state of affairs.

Example of a ‘sad’ case story

A 43-year-old woman lives with her husband (48 years old) and eight children. It is a very poor household; family members—including most of the children—work as day laborers to “put food on the table.” She joined the project-run livelihood improvement group (LIG) in 2010 and borrowed funds from the group to invest in chicken rearing. However, she never repaid the loan because the chickens got sick shortly thereafter and died. She has stopped going to meetings and trainings provided by the project; she often has to miss them to either work all day or look for work. Her husband consumes a lot of alcohol, which drains the family budget. Also, when inebriated, he is often verbally and physically abusive towards his wife. The authorities have intervened twice to restrain him from being physically abusive, but he has not changed his ways. Becoming a LIG member did not change her life significantly. The family is still very poor, and none of the children go to school. Her husband currently has a new girlfriend and is gone from the house most of the time.

Analysis of case

- **Domains of change:** Access to knowledge; domestic violence; women’s participation; gender division of labour; reproductive health
- **Why is this a sad case?** Domestic violence did not cease, persistent poverty, debts
- **Why did it not change?**
 - a. Domestic violence: The husband still consumes alcohol; he is not aware of the impact of his behavior; poverty
 - b. Access to knowledge: The woman did not benefit from the training; she only attended a few because she works far away from home; her husband does not allow her to attend
 - c. Gender division of labour: Husband does not help in household chores and is absent from home with new girlfriend
 - d. Reproductive health: They do not practice family planning and have many small children
- **What can the project do?**
 - a. Advocate about domestic violence law through CEW and commune authorities
 - b. Mobilise elders in the community to raise awareness on domestic violence
 - c. Support the children to stay at the pagoda while the mother is at work
 - d. Organise trainings on reproductive health
 - e. Think of inventive ways to re-finance the debt

Reporting

Case-based monitoring has been deployed in RULIP only recently. Since May 2012, the three provinces had collected 58 cases (19 sad cases). Through additional project actions, the situation was improved in 8 of these 19 cases. Even in only a few months of application of the new M&E tool, there were visible reporting improvements and feedback impacts on the well-being of the beneficiaries. The reporting schedule is as follows:

Monthly report from district office to provincial office

The case-based monitoring stories are to be included in the monthly report from the district. One case will be discussed at each district each month.

Quarterly report from province office to central office

A summary of the cases will be made and included in the quarterly report. The full notes from the presentation and discussion of one case (most probably a happy case) will be attached to the quarterly report to illustrate the specific changes and to highlight the impact of project activities.

Semi-annual and annual report (from PSU at national level to IFAD)

The aggregate result in the quarterly report will be used to explain the reasons for the reported state of the indicators according to the logframe. The suggestions from the quarterly report would be discussed in the annual planning session and will be reflected in the plan of activities' for the following year.

Table 1. Quarterly report on happy stories.

Domains of Change	Achievements	Factors contributing to achievements	Project interventions	No. of Cases
1. Women's access to knowledge	Women have improved agriculture production knowledge	New trainings to increase knowledge and skills of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project provided technical training. The project provided agricultural inputs (grants and loans). 	7
2. Domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced violence in the Families Happy family relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She was persistent and creative in convincing her husband to quit. She got good support from people around her – her mother-in-law, CEW and neighbors. Her husband also attended training Non-project: Public awareness raising campaign against domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project provided gender-awareness training Providing support through CEW 	10

Domains of Change	Achievements	Factors contributing to achievements	Project interventions	No. of Cases
3. Changes in gender division of labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Husband sharing in household responsibilities ▪ New life in the Village ▪ Happy family relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Husband attended gender awareness training ▪ Husband participated in gender awareness and children education campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project provided economic and training support ▪ The project provided gender-awareness training 	5
4. Men's self confidence	Men's confidence has improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men discuss issues with family members rather than being violent ▪ Men's economic opportunities improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project provided gender-awareness training ▪ Project provided economic and training support 	6

Refresher workshop

A refresher workshop is planned to be held once a year, in order to review and revise the domains of change. It will be used as an opportunity to improve discussions with new questions and analysis at the district meetings.



Conclusion

Gender process monitoring serves a dual purpose. First, it complements the annual outcome surveys (AOS) by providing vital qualitative information that covers issues and nuances that cannot be captured by the format of the mid-term project review. Especially by collecting both happy and sad cases, it is possible to have a broader overview of the potential risks. The dialogue format of the monitoring allows for reflection on achievements and introduces important perspectives when analysing the annual outcome assessment reports. It brings a deeper level of quality to the reflection and learning, which feeds into the planning for the following years of the action as well as into new project development.

The other purpose is to strengthen the capacity of gender analysis at the field level. It can lead to a better appreciation of the interventions introduced to promote gender equality. A crucial issue is how to integrate this exercise as part of the staff's routine field visits. Gender-based case collections can support the creation of a 'listening culture' among the field level staff, which is crucial for effective implementation of participatory development projects. This monitoring requires field workers to spend more time talking and listening to women stakeholders (especially vulnerable and marginalised women, the 'sad' cases) and to carefully note their experiences and grievances.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
AOS	annual outcome surveys
CEW	commune extension worker
CGPM	case-based gender process monitoring
CWCFP	commune women and children focal point
DST	district support team
FGD	focus group discussion
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KM	knowledge management
KS	knowledge sharing
LIG	livelihood improvement group
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change
PSU	project support unit
RULIP	Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project
UN	United Nations

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Integrating Gender in CHARMP2 Planning and Monitoring



Gender challenges in the Cordillera

Women in the Cordillera play a crucial role in agriculture. They are typically involved in the entire agricultural process from the preparation of the fields to planting, weeding, harvesting, storing and milling of the produce. Men are engaged mainly in opening, building and plowing the rice fields.

In recent years, more burden has been put on farmers, particularly on women who take up the primary roles both as nurturers and income earners. As a result, more women than men have become migrant workers.

Moreover, Cordilleran women have limited opportunities for political participation, both in the indigenous and government structure. The traditional governing body among indigenous communities is the council of elders,

which is, without exception, constituted of male members. The exclusion of women is so severe that when *ator* or *dapay* meetings are being conducted, women are not allowed to even walk by, much less participate. Their sole contribution toward these meetings is the preparation of food for the event. At the barangay and municipality levels of local government, the national trend holds with very few women taking up leadership positions.

The *ator* or *dapay*: “as a socio-political institution, Dap-ay elements include member families, leaders, customary law, code of conduct, sanctions, and traditional ceremonies and rituals. To community members, it’s a place where male members of the ward gather for meetings and rituals. It consists of a hut and an open meeting place made of stone slabs.”

Source: <http://www.new.kasapi.org/index.php/news/30-dap-ay-sagada-s-indigenous-socio-political-institution>

Gender strategy

To raise women’s status in the Cordillera, the Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Management Project (CHARMP2) embraced a gender strategy to facilitate gender equitable participation in their planned activities. To achieve this, the Project applies the following measures:

- At the participatory project investment planning sessions in the communities, women and men will be initially consulted separately to allow women to express their views freely until a unified plan is generated.
- In the direct employment created by project activities such as reforestation, infrastructure construction, etc, the project will ensure that women have the opportunity to fully participate.
- Micro-finance and skills training for women groups will be provided.
- Many project activities will promote the formation of groups with women comprising at least 40% in membership.

These measures are now embodied in the Project’s documents, including the logical framework, annual work plan and budgets, subproject/activity plans and M&E forms. For instance, a gender target of at least 40% in membership and 30% in leadership positions for women was explicitly indicated in the Project’s logical framework. Such should be the women’s participation in community organisations partnering with the Project. Thus, gender concerns are monitored in project planning and implementation of subprojects and activities.

The CHAMP2 Project Support Office implements a hiring policy that gives preference to women, assuming qualifications are equal among applicants. The Project’s gender focal person sits as a permanent member of the Project’s Staff Selection Committee.

A gender mainstreaming strategic focus for IFAD projects in the Philippines was developed by the IFAD Philippines Gender Network (IFAD PGN). It aims to provide a common framework for mainstreaming gender in IFAD projects in the country that is consistent with the Philippine’s gender and development (GAD) policy.

Gender and community participatory planning

The CHARMP2 started its activities in the field with all the 170 target barangays by preparing barangay project investment plans. It is also at this point where CHARMP2's gender mainstreaming began to evolve.

Steps in community participatory planning

1. Community orientation
2. Participatory planning
 - a. Identification and prioritisation of proposed subprojects and activities to be supported by the Project.
 - b. Sectoral workshops (e.g., women, elders, irrigator associations, forest management groups and the like). Each sector identifies and ranks proposed projects based on their felt needs.
 - c. Community prioritisation. Results of sectoral workshops are presented to the community for validation.
3. Inclusion of investment plan into local government plans. The investment plan is endorsed by the community to the barangay development council (BDC). The BDC is the government body at the barangay level tasked to formulate, implement and monitor community plans by mobilising people's participation. In the Philippines, the barangay is the smallest local government unit. The BDC further endorses the plan to the municipal development council (MDC), then to the provincial development council (PDC).

“...during the presentation of their investment plan, the women and men had a brief debate on what would be first-rank between a domestic water supply (DWS) and a community irrigation system (CIS) project. The men argued that the CIS rehabilitation should be prioritised to improve water flow into the rice fields. The women argued otherwise, indicating that the DWS must be constructed first because they don't have a system at the moment and they need water for their daily home chores. Eventually, the men agreed with the women.”

(As narrated by Mr. Jerry Banawa, former CHARMP2 provincial coordinator for the province of Abra during one of the prioritisation workshops).

In the final selection of subprojects to be supported, the Project adopts the checklist prescribed under the National Economic and Development Authority's (NEDA) Harmonised GAD guidelines to ensure that proposed projects will benefit both men and women. Likewise, the Project is also guided by the gender mainstreaming focus for IFAD projects in the Philippines by integrating suggested activities such as but not limited to

- a. co-sponsoring workshops, consultative meetings and trainings with members of the IFAD Philippines Gender Network (IFAD PGN)—in terms of policy;
- b. conducting orientation sessions on GAD, value formation and gender orientation to Project staff, partners, beneficiaries and livelihood skills training for women (e.g., farmers, business school)—in terms of people;
- c. collecting and maintaining a database on gender disaggregated data, advocating greater women participation in projects and activities and incorporating enabling policies for access of women to Project services—in terms of projects and activities;

- d. formulating a Project gender plan to serve as a cohesive guide for all Project staff - in terms of enabling mechanisms.

These activities are constantly monitored to track the attainment of desired gender outcomes in the Project.

The Project prepares a GAD plan and updates it annually. Table 1 shows a glimpse of the said plan.

Composition of peoples' organisations

In organising partner peoples' organisations (POs) in the barangays, the Project advocates the ratio of at least 40% and 30% women in membership and leadership positions, respectively. The suggested ratio is also encouraged in the formation of barangay participatory monitoring and evaluation teams (BPMET). In cases where there are already existing POs, which already have their own set of officers and members, these POs are encouraged to review their membership structure to consider the women-to-men ratio.

In a series of trainings provided to the POs, gender topics are incorporated to sustain gender advocacy throughout the duration of the Project.

Project implementation

The results of CHARMP2's efforts to make the Project gender-sensitive looks promising. The level of women's participation in many subprojects and activities is beyond target. As of this writing, based on the profiling of POs and its members, the CHARMP2 has already reached 12,377 individuals in the communities covered. About 46% were women.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Focus

Scope of focus

Defined in terms of the life of the project and its logframe and project priorities in collaboration with government, non-government organisations, private sector, civil society partners and the target sectors.



Strategic goal

Equal access to economic opportunities and representation and equitable allocation of resources between rural women and men to enable poor rural people to raise their incomes, improve food security to feed their families, strengthen their resilience and have greater control over their lives.

Objectives

Provide the IFAD/Philippine-assisted projects with a common framework on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), applicable concepts and tools that would facilitate GEWE mainstreaming particularly in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to maximise project impacts (indicated/presented in the logframe, baseline survey, KM, impact assessment);

Support the Philippine government and IFAD in the complementation of project activities to achieve GEWE; and

Optimise resources; define clear mechanisms for harmonisation and complementation to create substantial results/impacts relevant to gender equality and women empowerment.

Source: IFAD Philippines Gender Network (2011), Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Focus for IFAD Projects in the Philippines

Table 1. Gender and development plans of the CHARMP2.

Component	Gender issue/ concern	GAD objective	Identified GAD activity	Target	GAD performance indicator	GAD budget ('000)
1. Social Mobilisation Participatory Investment Planning and Land Tenure	Access of rural, indigenous women to social security, land, income-generating activities and participation in decision-making	Ensure participation of women in community development	Separate consultation with women to allow them to express their views freely in participatory investment planning (PIP) workshops	170 PIPs reviewed annually	Increased percentage of rural, indigenous women involved in PIP.	1,500
		Ensure women in leadership positions	Strengthening peoples' organisations	170 groups	30% of women in leadership positions	4,788
2. Community Watershed Conservation, Forest Management and Agroforestry	Employment and livelihood skills for women	Give equal opportunity for women to participate in reforestation/ agroforestry projects	Selection of eligible women's groups/ members for direct employment in reforestation projects	More women actively attending or participating in reforestation projects	30% of members participating in reforestation projects are women	3,000
				Women benefiting from agroforestry projects	Number	1,000
3. Agriculture, Agribusiness and Income-Generating Activities	Awareness among women of their economic rights and opportunities	Raise women's income through: improved standards of production	Workshops in value chain development, organic certification and product development	More women benefiting from workshops	At least 50% of participants are women involved in value chain development	80,000
					At least 50% of the beneficiaries are women engaged in income-generating activities	

Both men and women have an equal chance of participating in reforestation, agroforestry, agribusiness and income generation and related activities such as trainings.

Though construction of larger rural infrastructure, particularly farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems and domestic water supply systems require the employment of males, the construction of footpaths involves women.

Monitoring gender in project activities

Gender disaggregation is basic information collected using the Project M&E forms. Reports submitted by Project staff, including those of partner agencies and local government units (LGU), indicate the number of participating males and females.

The harmonised GAD guidelines seek to promote the twin goals of gender equality and women empowerment. Specifically, they aim to

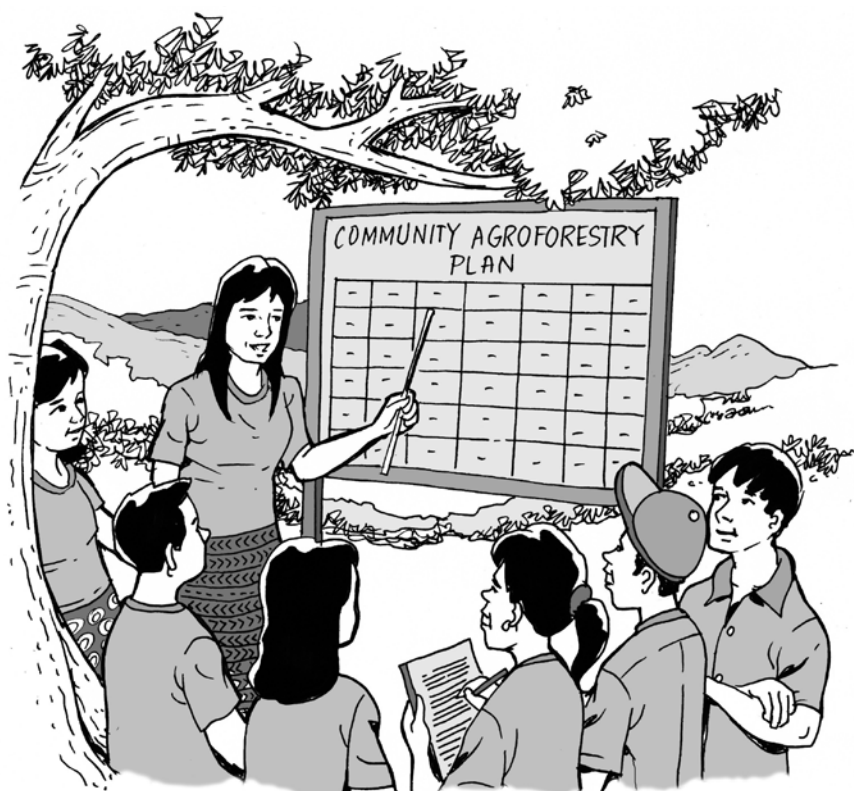
1. Provide NEDA, official development assistance donors, Philippine government agencies and development practitioners with a common set of analytical concepts and tools for integrating gender concerns into development programs and projects and
2. Help achieve gender equality in and empower women through projects and programmes.

Source: Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (2007), 2nd ed. NEDA, NCRFW, ODA-GAD

With inputs from the IFAD gender specialist for the Philippines, the Project conducted gender analysis and harmonisation workshops with LGU partners focused on

- Gender division of labour, access and control women and men have over inputs required for their labor and the benefits of their labor;
- The impact of development on women and men;
- Policies and plans to determine whether these are gender-sensitive; and
- Participation rates of women and men in activities.

The workshops heightened awareness of Project staff as well as local government partners on gender concerns and issues, consequently resulting in gender sensitising the Project logframe, preparation of the annual work



plan and budget (AWPB), subproject and activity plans and designs and, ultimately, the implementation of subprojects and activities.

Applicable gender-related indicators are being monitored and regularly reported to the Department of Agriculture in compliance with the Philippine Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta for Women and to IFAD for its results and impact management system.

In a workshop on NEDA's harmonised GAD guidelines, facilitated by IFAD Philippines in December 2012, the Project garnered a score of 18.84 for project identification and design and 16.25 for project implementation. Based on the guidelines, this rating is gender-responsive in both aspects. Along with other result indicators, gender indicators applicable to the Project are monitored and included in succeeding evaluation studies.

Table 2. A few samples of first-level RIMS indicators being monitored along with other Project indicators.

Indicator	Unit
People trained in infrastructure management	Number
	Male
	Female
Groups managing infrastructure formed/strengthened	Number
People in groups managing infrastructure formed/strengthened	Number
	Male
	Female
Groups managing infrastructure with women in leadership position	Number
Land under irrigation schemes constructed/rehabilitated	Ha
People in natural resource management groups formed/strengthened (PO members)	Number
	Male
	Female
Natural resource management groups with women in leadership positions	Number
Land under improved management practices	Ha
People trained in crop production and technologies	Number
	Male
	Female
Roads constructed	Km
Marketing groups with women in leadership position	Number
Community groups formed/strengthened	Number
Community groups with women in leadership positions	Number
Village/community plans formulated	Number
Drinking water systems constructed/rehabilitated	Number

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BDC	barangay development council
BPMET	barangay participatory monitoring and evaluation teams
CIS	community irrigation systems
CHARMP2	Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Management Project
DWS	domestic water supply
GAD	gender and development
GEWE	gender equality and women empowerment
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IFAD PGN	IFAD Philippines Gender Network
LGU	local government unit
Logframe	logical framework
MDC	municipal development council

M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
POs	people's organisations
PDC	provincial development council
PIP	participatory investment planning
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System

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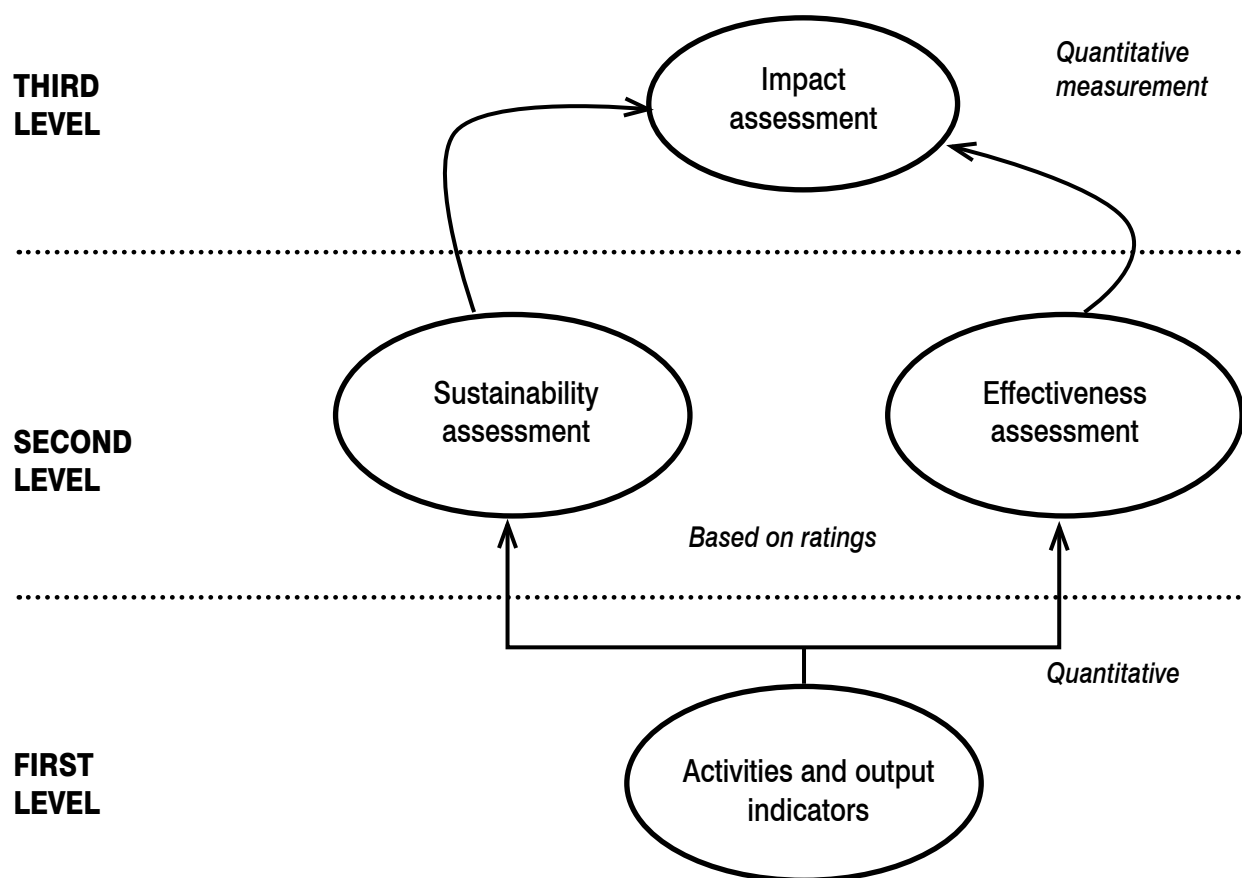
FIELD-TESTED M&E METHODS AND TOOLS





Results and Impact Management System (RIMS and RIMS+)

IFAD's Results and Impact Management System



RIMS: a schematic overview

Overview

RIMS (Results and Impact Management System) is a comprehensive system for measuring and reporting on the results and impact of IFAD-supported country programmes. It provides a framework for systematic reporting by project staff to IFAD and by IFAD to its governing bodies. RIMS includes a menu of standard indicators used to measure and report on the performance across all IFAD projects—at activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.

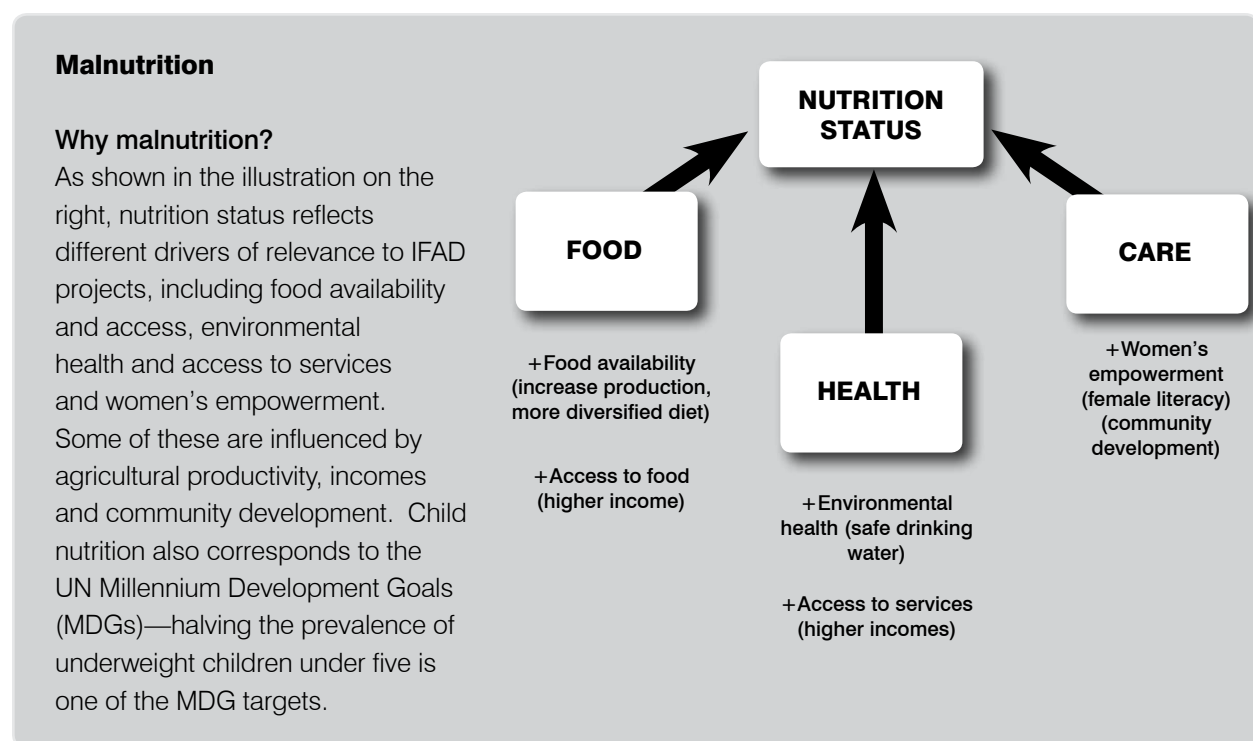
RIMS impact survey methodology

- Surveys 900 randomly selected households
- Anchored on surveying household's asset ownership and anthropometric measurement of children
- No control group

All IFAD-funded projects are required to conduct this standard survey (called the RIMS impact survey) at the start and end of the project. It provides objective quantifiable and comparable data which, when combined with qualitative information, can give a good overview of a project's contributions to changes and results at the household level (corresponding to project's goal and purpose).

The survey is anchored on two mandatory measures:

- a) **A household asset survey:** This aims to capture the evolution of the household asset index over time and also provides a basis for analysing changes in relative wealth of the project's target group.
- b) **The child nutrition survey:** Based on WHO and UNICEF standards for measuring child height and weight, this survey captures data related to three main variables: chronic malnutrition (stunting or height-for-age); acute malnutrition (wasting or weight-for-height); and proportion of children underweight (weight-for-age).



The RIMS questionnaire also includes other indicators, but these are not considered mandatory if not relevant to the project. The additional RIMS impact indicators include

- Literacy
- Access to safe water
- Access to improved sanitation
- Food insecurity - intensity and spread of hungry seasons

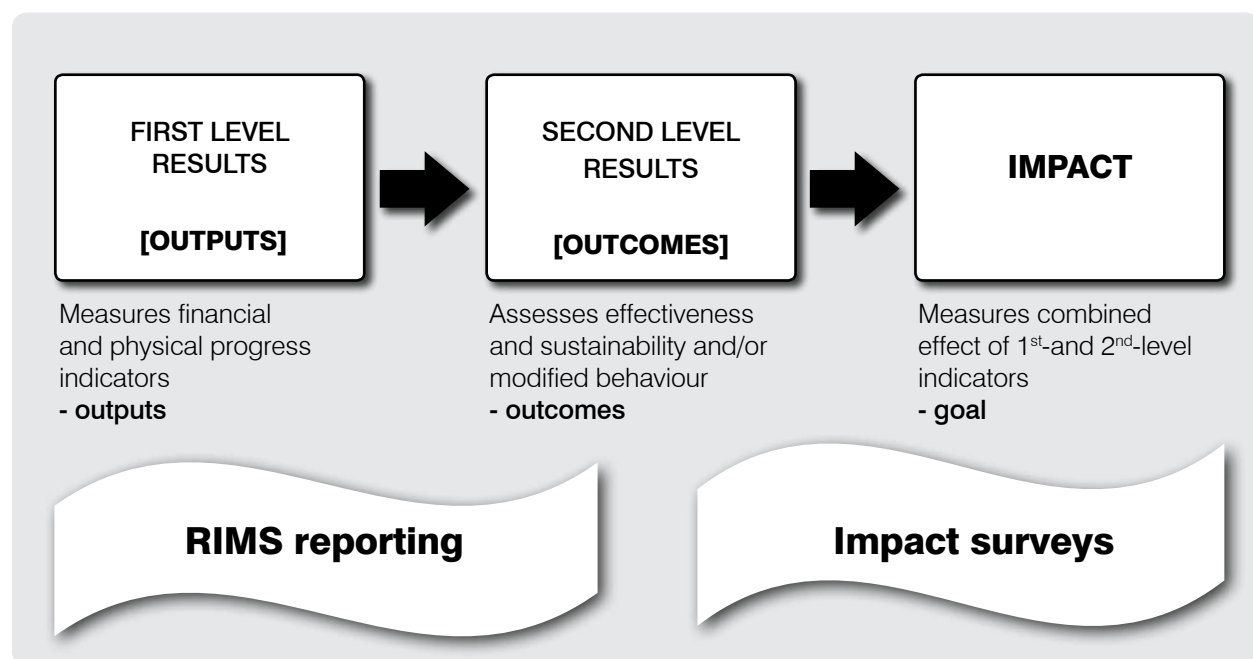
Indicators identified for each level of results

IFAD's RIMS methodology differentiates between three levels of results.

- First-level results (outputs): measures financial and physical progress
- Second-level results (outcomes): measures improved functionality and/or behavioural changes
- Third-level results (impact): measures the combined effects of the first and second-level results, usually quantitative (e.g., households reporting increased assets)

Except for the above mentioned mandatory anchor indicators for the impact survey and the mandatory RIMS outreach indicators (number of households receiving project services), indicators may be selected from a list of 70 standardised RIMS indicators. Standardization allows for comparing and aggregating between projects in a country, region or globally. Figure 1 below shows the relationship between the three levels of RIMS indicators.

Figure 1. Position of RIMS indicators, from results to impact.



RIMS indicators were devised to be representative of the type of interventions carried out by IFAD-funded projects. IFAD and the Project Management Unit need to agree on which measures of the various result categories (output, outcome and impact) are most appropriate. Agreements on overall and annual project targets are also undertaken.

Only the selected and agreed RIMS outputs and outcomes need to be reported on a scheduled basis to IFAD. However, additional indicators might be necessary for the effective execution of the project planning and M&E functions. Impact is assessed and measured on the basis of survey data generated by IFAD or from secondary sources (if relevant/reliable data are available and survey was carried out at a time considered relevant for benchmarking the situation at the time considered of project launch. The list of RIMS 1st- and 2nd-level indicators can be obtained at <http://www.ifad.org/operations/index.html>).

Practical application of RIMS

Executing RIMS from project start-up to completion

- Conduct RIMS impact baseline survey at start-up (and final RIMS impact survey at completion) using the IFAD RIMS survey questionnaire.
- Identify and agree on a list of indicators, including targets. A selection of indicators relevant to a particular project is made (see Table 1 for the complete set). Selection should include between 10 and 15 RIMS output indicators (level 1) that reflect the key project output areas, and between 5 and 10 outcome indicators (level 2) reflecting the key result areas.
- Ensure that RIMS indicators reflect the project logframe and that the selected RIMS indicators are part of the M&E system.
- Develop a plan for collecting and analysing indicators, including frequency, data collection methods, resources needed, assigned staff, etc.
- Collect data and information needed on the selected first-and 2nd-level indicators on annual basis. Outcome (level 2) indicator measurement must be reported to IFAD from year 3; it is suggested to take earlier measures for the project's own benchmarking and assessment purposes. This can be done using RIMS+, annual outcome surveys or other methods selected by the project.
- An annual record/report is to be submitted to IFAD with annual progress reports and reviewed by IFAD. These annual reports should also be updated and made available for validation by periodic IFAD supervision missions. At IFAD headquarters, all the projects' submitted data and information are aggregated and reported to the Executive Board each year (see box below).

Reporting in the context of RIMS

- More attention to impact management
- Selection of programme-specific indicators from the RIMS universe
- Data on indicators reported to IFAD annually, periodically reviewed with IFAD HQ, in-country officers or supervision teams
- Impact surveys required at baseline and completion

RIMS implies a significant shift in focus from physical and financial progress (level 1) to changes in behavioural outcome (level 2) and to impact in terms of improved living conditions (level 3).

- There are a number of **RIMS resources** listed below in Box 4 that should help the application of RIMS to each IFAD project.

RIMS resources

- Web page: www.ifad.org/operations/rims:
- Handbook for reporting first/second-level results
- Handbook and software for undertaking baseline and impact surveys

Survey software

A survey software has been developed by IFAD for data entry and reporting and is available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. All RIMS impact reporting is embedded in this MSAccess software. Reports that can be generated from this software are produced in tables and graphs. It provides an in-built analysis of child malnutrition reports measured against new WHO standards, and a Principal Components Analysis formula that establishes cut-off points that divide households into 5 groups of relative poverty based on their comparative ownership of assets; and therefore demonstrates movement across those cut off points at project completion. All reports and all data can be exported to different formats, and follow-up surveys can be compared. The software and user manual can be downloaded at www.ifad.org/operations/rims/

Data entry

IFAD Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty

Housing properties and assets

Q1-Q2-Q3

1.a- What is the main material of the dwelling floor?
1 Earth - Sand

1.b- How many sleeping rooms in the dwelling?
[]

2- What is the main source of the drinking water for members of your household?
4 Tubewell - Borehole with pump

3.a- What kind of toilet facility does your household use?
[]

3.b- Is this toilet facility located within your dwelling or yard or compound?
[]

Q4-Q5

Q4

4.a- In the last 12 months, did your household experience a hungry season? []

4.b- During what month did the hungry season begin? []

4.c- During what month did the hungry season end? []

4.d- In the last 12 months, did your household experience a second hungry season? []

4.e- During what month did the second hungry season begin? []

4.f- During what month did the second hungry season end? []

5- Does your household have...?

Electricity []

Radio []

Television []

Refrigerator []

Other asset []

Previous Cancel Next

Data quality, reports and analyses

- Data entry and quality: Locally adapted assets can be included, all questions to be filled (“no response” options included), checks for height and weight, age calculation, missing child data, data correction, re-entry and verification.
- Child malnutrition: Calculations based on the new WHO standards. Old datasets (compatible with new version) can be easily recalculated. Outliers ignored (beyond z-score of +6, -6). Scores can be calculated on the basis of months.
- Principal component analysis: Factors that explain variance in asset distribution are analysed. Households are stratified on these factor scores into five groups (quintiles), and movement among quintiles across surveys measured.

Some salient features of RIMS impact measurement

Given the challenges and complexity of estimating income levels accurately, the RIMS impact measurement approach relies on measures of asset ownership and child nutrition as a proxy indicator for increased income and reduced poverty. Moreover, in consideration of the complexity and challenges of accurately selecting and administering a viable control survey (of nonparticipating farmers with similar conditions as participating farmers), the RIMS impact survey adopts a contribution (rather than attribution) approach. Control groups are not deployed and instead comparison is simply limited to ‘before’ and ‘after’ situations. Projects therefore need to complement the survey data with qualitative analyses to help explain the differences brought about by each project. Projects may also draw on national or subnational data to analyse broader changes taking place in the project area that may have occurred simultaneously with the project’s intervention.

The stratified random sampling methodology does not track the same households over time; so, for statistical purposes, it does not provide panel data. It is also possible that findings from a survey may be diluted by the inclusion of nonproject beneficiaries at the completion phase (the result of the clustered random selection methodology recommended by RIMS survey guidelines). However, as these are only guidelines, adjustments in the methodology can be made as long as this is done carefully and with expert advice to ensure that the random selection principle is not compromised, and the validity of the data is maintained. Generally, but especially in such cases, survey reports must include a section explaining the sampling methodology adopted and listing the randomly selected survey clusters.

RIMS+ surveys

Recognizing that most IFAD-funded projects are multisectoral interventions covering a wide range of subsectors (natural resource management, agricultural development, irrigation, infrastructure, livestock, microfinance, community development, etc.), the scope of the standard RIMS impact surveys may be too limited to reflect the variety of impacts that IFAD-funded projects may have at the household or community level. Therefore, it is recommended that, along with the standard RIMS impact survey, projects will also conduct a RIMS+ impact survey—an additional questionnaire tailored to reflect the specific conditions of each project intervention. The RIMS+ questionnaire should be administered just after a given respondent has

finished answering all the questions of the RIMS Household Assets questionnaire and before the height and weight of the respondent's children are measured (as part of the RIMS malnutrition survey).

Similar to the approach in the RIMS first-and second-level indicator selection, the RIMS+ questionnaire includes various clusters of questions and allows each project to select those clusters most relevant to their specific intervention strategy. By tailoring the survey to its specificity, RIMS+ provides a more comprehensive basis to document the actual, and diverse, impacts of the project. Asking these additional questions will only marginally increase (by an estimated 15 minutes) the time spent by each enumerator with each survey respondent. This provides a valuable opportunity to better understand and document the outcomes and impact of the project. Given that the standard RIMS software cannot accommodate additional questions, a separate database is used to enter and analyse the answers to these additional questions.

Table 1. RIMS indicators (partial listing only provided here).

RIMS INDICATOR FIRST-LEVEL RESULTS - OUTPUTS		RIMS INDICATORS SECOND-LEVEL RESULTS - OUTCOMES	VARIABLES MEASURED THROUGH RIMS
1. Natural resources (land and water)			The “anchor” indicators:
1.1	People trained in infrastructure management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Number of groups operational / functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Household asset index▪ Child malnutrition (see box)
1.2	Groups managing infrastructure formed and/or strengthened		
1.3	People in groups managing infrastructure		
1.4	Groups managing infrastructure with women in leadership positions		
1.5	Land under irrigation schemes constructed or rehabilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Farmers with secure access to water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Female/ male literacy▪ Access to safe water▪ Access to improved sanitation
1.6	Livestock water points constructed or rehabilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Incremental hectares of crop grown	
1.7	Rainwater harvesting systems constructed or rehabilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Number of functioning infrastructure	
1.8	Fish ponds constructed or rehabilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Farmers with secure access to water resources	
1.9	People trained in NRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fishers with secure access to resource base	
1.10	Groups involved in NRM formed/strengthened		
1.11	People in NRM groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fishing pond operational after 3 years	
1.12	NRM groups with women in leadership positions		
1.13	Environmental management plan formulated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Number of groups operational/ functional	

RIMS INDICATOR FIRST-LEVEL RESULTS - OUTPUTS		RIMS INDICATORS SECOND-LEVEL RESULTS - OUTCOMES	VARIABLES MEASURED THROUGH RIMS
1.14	Land under improved management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hectares of land improved through soil/water conservation methods	
2. Agricultural technologies and production			Others:
2.1	Staff of service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Operational self-sufficiency▪ Farmers reporting production/ yield increase▪ Farmers adopting recommended technologies▪ Farmers reporting increased herd size▪ Fishers adopting recommended technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Food insecurity (intensity and spread of hungry seasons)
2.2	People trained in crop production practices and technologies		
2.3	People trained in livestock production practices and technologies		
2.4	People trained in fish production practices and technologies		
2.5	People accessing facilitated advisory services		
2.6	Households receiving animals from distribution and/ or restocking		
2.7	Households receiving facilitated animal health services		
3. Rural financial services			
4. Access to markets			
5. Enterprise development and employment			
6. Policy and community programming			
7. Social infrastructure			
8. Total outreach			

For details: Please check complete listing of RIMS indicators (<http://www.ifad.org/operations/rims/index.htm>)

For details: Please check complete listing of RIMS indicators
(<http://www.ifad.org/operations/rims/index.htm>)

Reference

Adapted from materials from Maria Donnat, IFAD, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, 16 April 2011, Tawfiq El Zabri, IFAD, M&E Workshop, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 21 July 2012, and Shyam Khadka, IFAD RIMS presentation, Rome, 13 January 2013.

Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NRM	natural resources management
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RIMS+	Results and Impact Management System Plus
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Bio-sketch and Contact Details

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Results and Impact Management System Plus (RIMS+)

Additional Features for Impact Evaluation



The RIMS (Results and Impact Management System) is a comprehensive system for measuring, analysing, and reporting on the results and impact of IFAD-supported country programmes and projects. All projects need to conduct a RIMS survey at the beginning and at the end of the project cycle. While conducting the RIMS surveys in Vietnam, it became obvious that the scope of the standard RIMS survey with its focus on measuring high-level impact at the household level was too focused to capture the variety of impacts. In response, the RIMS Plus Survey was developed (hereinafter referred to as RIMS+) to capture more detailed data than normally obtained from conventional RIMS surveys.

RIMS+ is built on IFAD's existing RIMS, and was elaborated in collaboration between IFAD-Vietnam, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Development and Policies Research Centre (DEPOCEN). It was first used for the 2011 baseline survey of the IFAD Tam Nong Support Programme in Tuyen Quang. Already to date, four RIMS+ baseline surveys in four project provinces, two RIMS+ completion surveys in two project provinces, and two RIMS+ annual outcome surveys (AOS) in two project provinces have been completed. The RIMS+ will be applied for the AOS in two additional provinces.

From RIMS to RIMS+

The standard RIMS

The RIMS survey, a standardised questionnaire to be applied for all projects in all countries, should be conducted at the beginning and upon completion of every project. It has two mandatory impact indicators:

- **Household asset ownership index:** This section is the basis for determining the household asset index, which captures the relative wealth of survey respondents.
- **Child nutrition:** This section measures three main variables: chronic malnutrition (stunting relative to height-for-age); acute malnutrition (wasting or weight-for-height); and proportion of children underweight (weight-for-age).



While conducting the RIMS survey in Vietnam, it was found that the questionnaire did not provide enough flexibility in design and analysis (for example, projects whose purpose encompasses assisting ethnic minorities would require information on each household's ethnic group, and this is not included in RIMS standard impact surveys). The scope of the standard RIMS impact surveys was considered to be too narrow to reflect the variety of impacts of the interventions. Furthermore, the absence of a control group limited the consideration of the impacts due to external factors. It was decided to expand the RIMS survey into a RIMS+, with additional questions tailored to reflect specific aspects of each project intervention. (For more details on the RIMS survey, please see www.ifad.org/operation/rims).

RIMS+

The RIMS+ is a set of additional questions integrated into the standard RIMS questionnaire, which can be tailored to the specific needs of particular project interventions. It allows for the collection of more coherent and comprehensive sets of data (e.g., on gender) to document the diverse impacts of projects. For ongoing IFAD-funded projects in Vietnam, there are two options for conducting a RIMS+ survey:

- Projects that have already conducted a standard RIMS baseline survey will conduct a RIMS+ completion survey.
- Projects that have not yet conducted a baseline survey will conduct both a baseline and a completion RIMS+ survey.

Table 1. Changes and advantages of RIMS+.

Changes	Advantages
Expanded questionnaire	More information can be collected to diagnose problems Project-specific indicators can be measured Information for improving the design of interventions is collected
Use of control group	Improved measurement of project impact by taking into account broader trends in rural areas
Additional training and supervision	Improved data quality Capacity building for local M&E officers
GPS to geo-reference households	Better supervision of enumerators Easier administration of follow-up surveys by revisiting the same respondents in follow-up survey
Flexible questionnaire and analysis	Information needs of the IFAD project and IFAD planning are addressed Analysis to meet project needs Analysis is fast, reliable and comparable

The quasi-experimental method

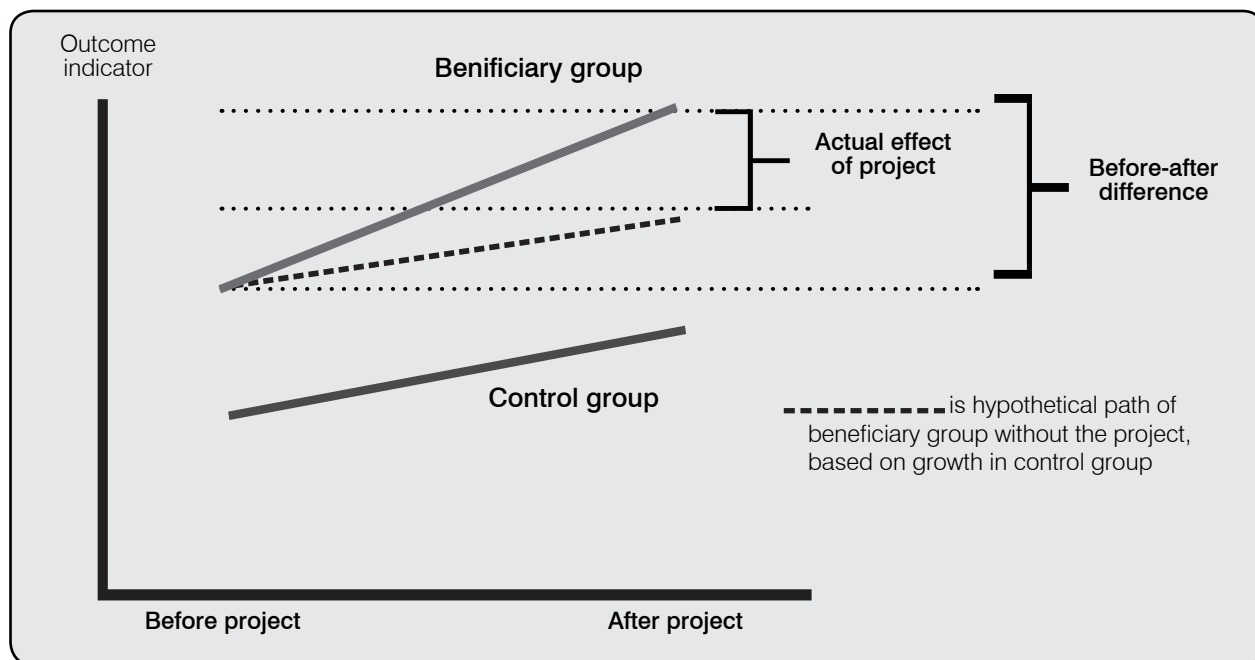
Quasi-experimental methods are designed typically to assess the causal impact of a project by mimicking the benefits of random selection. Two groups are selected for a study—a treatment group (households in the project areas) and a control group (households outside the project areas).

Many studies have found that project M&E systems, which assess project indicators before and after project implementation, are not adequate for understanding project impacts. Many factors change throughout the project, and new external factors can also influence the indicators (e.g., general economic growth/recession, educational interventions, world prices of commodities, natural disasters, etc.). The solution is to measure

the differences between households that participated in project interventions (subsidies, technical support, information, etc.) and those that did not.

Use of control groups enables us to analyse what would have happened in the targeted group if the intervention had not happened. Therefore, it is important to select a good control group, with similar characteristics to the treatment group (both observed and unobserved). In the IFAD-funded projects in Vietnam, control communes are usually selected to reflect the equivalent poverty rate and ethnic minority rate.

Figure 1. Use of control group.



Not participating in project activities does not automatically make a household in the same commune eligible to be considered as the control group. In general, there are three cases to consider when selecting a control group:

- Case 1 - Household-level intervention only. If the project only targets individual households (e.g., micro-finance programmes that lend to eligible individual households), then the non-beneficiary households in the same district may be considered eligible for the control group. In this case, the intervention on the targeted household will not have a spillover effect on the control household.
- Case 2 - District-level intervention. If the project has district-wide interventions (such as providing a bridge, a market place or a training program) then the non-beneficiary households in the project district are not eligible to be on the control group. In this case, the intervention on the target (treatment) households will also affect the non-target (control) households. For example, in a demonstration programme for mushroom farming, although non-beneficiary households may not participate in the project programme, they can still learn a lot from observing the programme. In such cases, the control group should be selected from non-project areas/districts.
- Case 3 - Both district- and household-level intervention. The selection process is similar to Case 2 above. We need to select the control group households from other 'similar' non-project districts.

The RIMS+ questionnaire

The RIMS+ questionnaire contains the standard RIMS questions, supplemented with additional project-specific inquiries. It covers a broad scope of areas, including agriculture, irrigation, raising livestock, supporting micro-finance and community development. The structure of the questionnaire follows RIMS standards. The following table provides a sample of the structure and content of the RIMS+ questionnaire.

Table 2. Additional RIMS+ questions in IFAD-funded projects in Vietnam.

	Category	Standard RIMS	RIMS+
Cover Page	N / A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the province, commune, village, and households interviewed Name of enumerator, supervisor, and survey date
A.	General information about household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household members: age, sex, literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnicity of household head and members Access to school of children (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>) Participation in common groups/unions
B.	Household characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floor material Number of bedrooms Sources of drinking water Toilet type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof material House ownership certificate and license (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
C.	Asset ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets Fuel for cooking Tools for tilling the land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other tools for agriculture farming
D.	Land	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmland size; land use certificate (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)

	Category	Standard RIMS	RIMS+
E.	Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duration of hungry season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food shortage solutions (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>) Daily nutrition (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
F.	Crop production	Little information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm size Yield and volume of sales Selling price Income from each crop Input costs Division of labour (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
G.	Livestock	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of livestock Volume of sales Input costs Income from each livestock Division of labour (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
H.	Market access	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The highest income product Selling location and time of travel to this location Seller and buyer Sources of market information Distance from house to selling places

	Category	Standard RIMS	RIMS+
I.	Extension training Vocational training	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension training: participation, attendance times, applicability (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>) Vocational training: participation, types of vocational training, income changes before and after participation (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
J.	Non-farming activities	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-farm Income Identifying the main income earner in the household Primary source and secondary source of income Financial management (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
K.	Credit access	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General loans: borrower, the person responsible for paying, source of loan, use of loan (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>) Loan supported by project: borrower, the person responsible for paying, purpose and use of loan, the effectiveness of loans (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>)
L.	Socioeconomic development plan and infrastructure building plan	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in developing socio-economic development plan and infrastructure plan (<i>gender-disaggregated</i>); Disseminating community information Satisfaction with local infrastructure
M.	Disasters and vulnerability	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency of disasters Risks and vulnerability Resilience (capacity to withstand or recover from disasters)

	Category	Standard RIMS	RIMS+
N.	Gender equality	No information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing awareness of family violence • Role of women in decision-making process in the family and community
O.	Anthropometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (in months) • Height and weight of children under 5 	No new information

A unique addition in the RIMS+ questionnaire is the inclusion of gender in question design. This will make it possible to take into consideration the effects of gender during the analysis. For example, the outcomes in the project action areas can be aggregated and compared across households headed by a man and those headed by a woman. The gender-sensitive approach is integrated in the RIMS+ questionnaire on the following aspects:

- Gender division of labour
- Gender differences in access and control over resources (e.g., income, employment, land, social services)
- Gender differences in information and knowledge
- Decision-making patterns in the household and community
- Women's and men's attitude and self-confidence
- Gender differences in vulnerability and coping strategies

In addition to the quantitative data collected through the survey questionnaire, qualitative data are also collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to provide more detailed information on the respondents' lives, experiences and perception on particular issues.

Lessons learned

After the initial RIMS+ 2011 baseline survey for Tam Nong Support Programme in Tuyen Quang, the supervisors and consultancy team from DEPOCEN and IFPRI highlighted the challenges and discussed with the staff the issues that came up during the implementation. Discussing these lessons learned was very important for the capacity building of IFAD M&E officers, so that they will be able to administer the survey in their own projects.

First, by adding more questions and information, the questionnaire also became more complicated. The interview time doubled, and it required improved skills by the enumerators. In other words, enumerators must be carefully trained in the administration of the questionnaire and interviewing skills so that they can understand and administer questions correctly. Also, supervisors must work harder to minimise errors in data gathering.

Second, the complexity and time requirements for data entry, processing, analysis and reporting have increased. RIMS+ requires a new data entry software, called CSPro. Now, M&E officers have to enter data using both RIMS software and new data entry software.

Third, the use of a control group increases the workload, with financial implications. The logistics and the cooperation with the local community are particularly challenging to organise in non-project areas. Furthermore, in remote mountainous areas, local people are still too shy to communicate with outsiders and openly share their views and conditions.



Finally, the GPS units add to the physical burden of the enumerators, considering that they have to carry a weight scale on the survey. Also, the operating system of the GPS units has not been translated into Vietnamese, so local enumerators and officers who do not feel comfortable in English may find them difficult to use.

Conclusion

RIMS+ has demonstrated improvements of M&E with different groups of beneficiaries. Based on these assessments of project impacts, decisionmakers can obtain a clearer picture of what is happening on the ground and can draft intervention activities that answer the needs of the local population.

To overcome the implementation challenges of the RIMS+ impact survey, it is recommended to focus closely on the preparation phase and frequently organise training and re-training courses to maintain the capacity of project officers to conduct a RIMS+ survey. In addition to training courses, IFAD Vietnam also organised workshops and seminars, which proved to be a good chance for inter-organisational knowledge exchange. All M&E officers from IFAD-funded projects, from across 11 provinces, met and shared their experiences, providing additional learning opportunities and improving the overall effectiveness of the M&E function.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	Annual Outcome Survey
DEPOCEN	Development and Policies Research Centre
GPS	Global Positioning System
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RIMS+	Results and Impact Management System Plus

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Streamlining Monitoring and Evaluation Information Gathering Systems

Tracking Progress Across Sulawesi



The Central Sulawesi Province is one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia. Its many villages are scattered across isolated areas in the hilly highlands. *The Rural Empowerment and Agricultural Development programme* (READ) set out to foster sustainable economic growth and improve natural resource management in 150 target villages in 5 districts of Central Sulawesi Province. The overarching goal of the programme is to strengthen the capacity of local communities, particularly the rural poor, so that they can better plan and manage the development of their livelihood capacity. The READ Programme works on four

core areas of intervention: (1) community empowerment; (2) on-farm and off-farm enterprise development; (3) rural infrastructure development; and (4) programme management and policy analysis. The lead partners are the national government and relevant line ministries (e.g., the Ministry of Agriculture), the provincial and local government, provincial and local level offices of ministries. Also civil society, private sector or academic institutions are engaged to provide expert services.

It is a substantial challenge to measure the activities being implemented at any given moment, the challenges and accomplishments of each action, as well as the broader impact of the combined efforts across the 150 villages. The READ programme management is implementing a Result-Based Management (RBM) approach to address these challenges.

Why revise the M&E information iystem

The IFAD Mid-term Review (MTR) Mission, conducted in October 2011, identified weaknesses in many of the programme's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and knowledge management approaches—especially in M&E and financial management. The recommendation was to initiate a comprehensive overhaul of the M&E system, in order to meet the set targets for the subsequent programme phase (2012–1014).

Areas for Improvement (identified during the MTR Mission)

- Data and indicators were not collected from field officers in a comprehensive way.
- Different forms were used to collect the same indicators, which meant that indicators could not be compiled and compared to yield a programme-wide analysis.
- Weak competence in executing M&E responsibilities.
- The robust M&E instrument and software applications were seen as too complex. Also, the instructions and operational guidelines were not clearly defined, which resulted in frequent delays in the flow of information.

During the first half of 2012, the M&E system was re-examined and redesigned, and since September 2012, it is being implemented across the programme. The main driving rationale behind the changes was to simplify the format and to assure that the indicators can be easily and quickly gathered and analysed.

The READ Software: Technical Specifications

The READ Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Information System is a software application that can be used in a network or stand alone. It is designed for the Windows operating system and Library Visual Foxpro 7.0. The data input form, which contains columns for actions, outputs, outcomes and impact indicator per activity—can be saved as a DBF file. The software application is compatible with the Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWPB) templates (used by IFAD) and the Rencana Kerja dan Anggaran Kementerian dan Lembaga or RKAKL (the equivalent used by the Indonesian government), which makes it possible to access and modify the same DBF file from each network.

Steps in developing the M&E information system

- 1. Review of existing methodology.** The management team and the contracted programmer reviewed the documents relevant to the M&E of the READ programme: programme implementation manual, logframe indicators, data and reporting formats.
- 2. Setting up data input forms.** The data input forms were selected based on the indicators, in line with the requirements set out in the logframe and appropriate for the reporting period.
- 3. Setting up the format for data output.** The specific format for presentation of the data analysis also depends on the requirements for the report. The output format was designed to be compatible with two different types of reporting needs: output indicators and RIMS indicators.
- 4. Designing the application system.** The programmer designed a monitoring and evaluation application system, based on the existing AWPB and RKAKL templates. The programming took two months, and did not face any significant setbacks. (this was quite an accomplishment, considering the scale of the challenge of designing new forms that are interoperable with two different templates.)
- 5. Testing of the new M&E software application system.** The testing was done in Palu City, and was attended by all M&E officers from this district. At the event, the programmer described the new system, and guided the officers through the process of inputting information, step by step. After they had an opportunity to try out the new software, they provided valuable user feedback, which was used to revise and improve the software.
- 6. Dissemination of the fully operational software application.** The dissemination took place in Banggai City. This was a massive training operation, which included all READ M&E officers. The management team and the programmer outlined the new system, its improvements, and guided the officers in test runs.



Using the M&E information system

Data entry starts at the level of the District Management Unit (DMU). Based on written reports from project officers, the M&E officer enters the AWPB data into the system on a monthly basis (quarterly and annual reviews are also completed to check for emerging trends). Once this step is complete, M&E officers save the file in a remote server and send a copy of the file to the National Supporting Unit (NSU) via email. The NSU M&E officer retrieves the data, compiles and correlates it across various characteristics (districts, types of activities, timeline etc.), and conducts a comprehensive analysis. The results are presented as a report, highlighting the financial and activity performance of the entire programme. The final output report describes the target goals and corresponding performance, according to the logframe and RIMS indicators. The report is then submitted to the managers at each unit level, where it will be used to inform decision-making.

The Value of Improved Monitoring

The new data gathering and presentation tools provided a quick and reliable review of the implementation of project activities on a monthly basis. For one project activity, the revolving fund, the November data indicated that it was being distributed at a much lower volume than planned. The provincial level manager could access the information and check which areas were underperforming. After discussions with district level project officers, the team uncovered the cause. The community groups that were formed to access the funds had not yet fulfilled the eligibility criteria (adequate bookkeeping) for receiving the funds. Thus, additional actions (training sessions) could be designed to help these groups access this much-needed financial assistance.

Main benefits and lessons learned

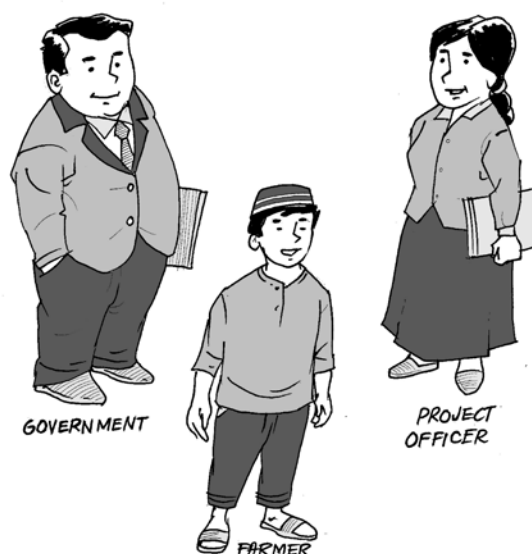
- **Improved data processing.** Data is entered once and can be used and reused for various types of reports. In case a correction needs to be made, the data can be quickly and easily accessed. Once data is entered into servers, it is kept secure with protection software, and regularly backed up to other remote servers.
- **Interoperability.** The software was developed using both IFAD and Indonesian government monitoring indicators, form templates, and reporting guidelines. It essentially provided the Indonesian government with a streamlined monitoring software system that can be used to compare impact across government projects as well as across interventions by other key development actors.
- **Simplified reporting.** M&E information systems make it very easy to classify output, outcome, and impact indicators as well as to generate the associated reports.
- **Improved response time.** Regularly compiled M&E data and impact indicators improve response time in project management. If serious problems arise at the DMU level, the management teams at NSU level have access to broad metrics that can paint a much more detailed picture, than can be obtained through phone calls.
- **Streamlining data gathering.** Developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provide opportunities for streamlining data gathering, and developing improved data processing systems for RBM. The data can be used as input by the management to exercise oversight and improve performance.
- **User friendly and accessible.** If designed properly, digital M & E systems can be simple, fast and very user friendly. The required hardware, a single personal computer per input point, is also simple to use and not very expensive.
- **M&E information system increase efficiency.** The workload for data entry and analysis of project result is reduced, freeing up valuable staff resources. It also reduces the time needed for integrating and processing data, in addition to shortening the feedback loop.

Remaining challenges

There are several main challenges for the implementation of the new M&E information system. All M&E officers should be trained and be able to operate the system well. Next, the M&E officers should be sufficiently motivated, by engaging them in meaningful tasks, and regularly monitored, to make sure that they provide consistent and valid updates of the required data. The final challenge is assuring that the M&E information system works without technical glitches that may jeopardize data integrity. Protecting the system from virus infections is of grave importance. To respond to some of these challenges, the READ management has planned additional training sessions for M&E officers in the use of M&E information systems.

Conclusion

Streamlining M&E information systems greatly improves the quality and processing of data transmission, integration and analysis. It also improves project operations, as it enables the project staff and management teams to make (informed) decisions more quickly and thus be able to better respond to emerging needs. Interoperable M&E information systems can provide high-quality logframe indicators—impact, output, and outcome—which can be compared with data gathered from other projects that work on the same target groups. Especially when several agencies work closely together (in this case the Indonesian government and IFAD) there is an additional effect of synergies between projects, which maximises benefits for final beneficiaries.



Acronyms and abbreviations

AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budgets
DBF	a standard database file format
DMU	District Management Unit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MTR	Mid-term Review
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NSU	National Supporting Unit
RBM	Results-Based Management

READ Rural Empowerment and Agricultural Development programme

RKAKL Rencana Kerja dan Anggaran Kementerian dan Lembaga

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Monitoring and Evaluation of the Philippine Development Plan Through the Results Matrices

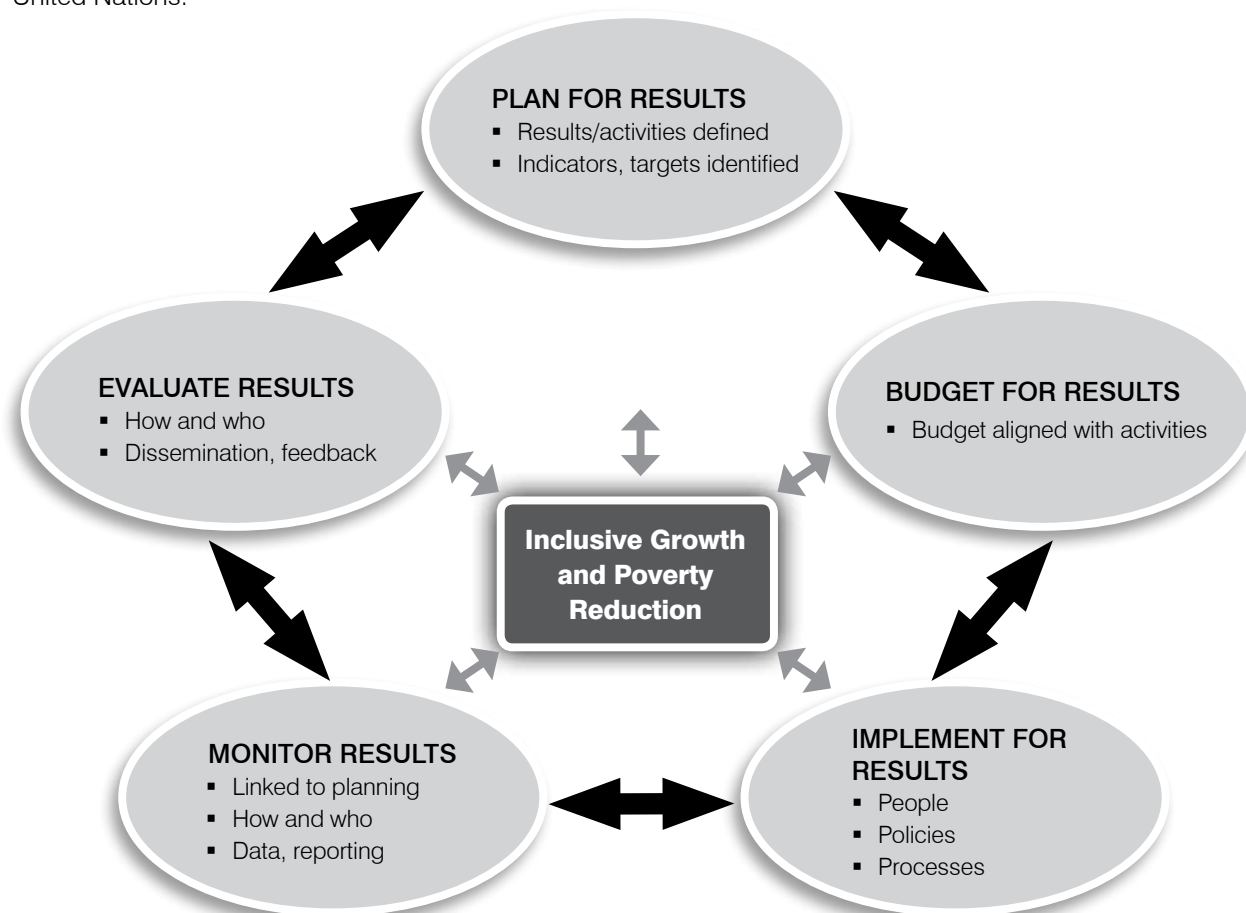


Results-based public sector management

A growing demand for increased transparency and accountability in the use of public resources has led to public sector reforms in a number of countries. Institutional reforms in improving public sector performance were also a response to the external pressure from development partners to reform management systems and show development results. Managing for results, one of the five pillars of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, emerged as an essential effort to improve effectiveness in public sector management.

The Government of the Philippines (GPH) has been continuously enhancing its own development processes to deliver results, and there have been recent efforts to establish a results-based management system. There are ongoing initiatives in incorporating results in all the five stages of public sector management (PSM) from planning, budgeting, implementation to monitoring and evaluation. In the Philippine context, all stages of PSM are focused on the overall achievement of the goal of inclusive growth and poverty reduction, as stated in the

Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016. Priority strategies have likewise been identified in the pursuit of fulfilling the commitments made by the GPH to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations.



The Philippine Development Plan and the Results Matrices

The PDP, as the country's overall development framework, contains the policy directions, development goals, strategies, and priority programmes and projects of the government for a period of 6 years. The PDP 2011-2016 focuses on high growth that is sustained, generates mass employment and reduces poverty. In the crafting of the current PDP, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as the country's socioeconomic planning and development agency, spearheaded the formulation of the results matrices (RMs) which integrate results-orientation vis-a'-vis the various strategies, programmes and projects outlined in the PDP. Introduced in CY 2010 as an accompanying document of the PDP, the RMs contain statements of objectives with a corresponding indicator framework for the various levels of results (goals and outcomes) targeted under the different chapters of the Plan. The RMs specifically contain indicator statements, baseline information, end-of-plan targets and assumptions/risks and identifies the responsible agencies. The RMs facilitates tracking of the progress of achievement of the Plan's targets by chapter. Serving as the PDP's primary M&E tool, determination and measurement of success or failure of the PDP are made possible through the RMs.

The Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016

- Based on the current administration's "Social Contract with the Filipino People"
- Overarching theme: "Good Governance and Anti-Corruption"
- Vision: "Achieve Inclusive Growth, Create Employment Opportunities and Reduce Poverty"



The Plan's vision: inclusive growth

- Higher economic growth of 7-8% per year for at least 6 years
- Growth that generates mass employment
- Growth that reduces poverty and helps achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Plan's broad strategies

- Attain a high and sustained economic growth that provides productive employment opportunities.
- Equalize access to development opportunities across geographic areas and across different income and social spectra
- Formulate and implement effective and responsive social safety nets to catch those who are unable to immediately participate in this new economic growth process.

The Plan's key strategies

- Massive investment in infrastructure
- Transparent and responsive governance
- Human development and improved social services
- Competitiveness to generate employment
- Access to financing

Developing the results matrices

Developing the RMs is a collaborative and joint effort among relevant stakeholders from the NEDA central and regional offices, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), sectoral agencies (national and regional), statistical agencies/research institutions, the academe and civil society organisations (CSOs). These stakeholders discuss and agree on the contents of the RMs. Highlights in the development of the RMs are as follows:

a) Selecting indicators

The indicators identified in the Plan serve as a guide in all stages of public sector management, from planning to M&E. The current set of indicators may be revised for clarity/appropriateness and new indicators added if deemed necessary. Poorly conceptualised and inappropriately identified indicators deleted or replaced by proxy indicators if they are found to be difficult and costly to monitor. Monitoring of the indicators should also be manageable, that is, it should be limited to seven indicators per objective statement.



Capacity development for results

A training programme on Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation, which involved technical staff from the NEDA central and regional offices, was conducted. Participants were equipped with the necessary tools and techniques in M&E with focus on the logical framework approach, from the formulation of indicators to the identification of risks and assumptions and presentation of M&E reports.

At the end of the training programme, participants were able to apply what they have learned in the formulation and revision of their own RRM. Technical assistance from the IFAD provided funding for the conduct of the training programme.

b) Setting baseline information

The baseline data, indicated by year and values, are either drawn from the PDP chapters or supplied by the responsible agencies. In case of multiple indicators with available baseline data, the most appropriate outcome indicator and those currently being gathered by the statistical agencies and/or concerned agencies are used.

c) Setting targets

At the societal goal level, targets are set for measurement at the middle and end of the Plan period. The same applies at the sector outcome level, except in CY 2015, when the achievement of MDGs is scheduled for final measurement. From the sub-sector outcome level to the major final output level, the annual targets (expressed in percentages, absolute values, ratios and other measures that

indicate directional change) are set as appropriate and available. The end-of-plan target of the outcome indicators are either drawn from the PDP chapters or supplied by concerned agencies.

d) Defining assumptions and risks

Lastly, assumptions and risks that would affect achievement of the outcomes are identified for the various levels of results.

The indicator matrix

In the development of the RMs, the final output is a table that contains the indicator statements, baseline information, end-of-plan targets and assumptions and risks for each level of result.

Objective/Result	Key result areas	Indicator/Unit	Baseline		End-of-Plan targets	Assumptions and risks
			Year	Value		
Societal goal ¹						
Sector outcome ²						
Subsector outcome (if applicable)						
Intermediate outcome (if applicable)						

¹ Societal goals or Impacts are the positive and negative primary and secondary long-term effects – both intended and unintended – produced directly or indirectly by development interventions.

² Outcomes are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outcomes are the observable behavioural and institutional changes, usually as the result of coordinated short-term investments in individual and organisational capacity building for key development stakeholders.

A more detailed table is likewise made available that contains the annual plan targets from 2011 to 2016, means of verification and the responsible agency per indicator of the various levels of results.

At the societal goal level, targets have been set for measurement at the middle and end of the Plan period. The same applies at the sector outcome level, except in 2015, when the achievement of the MDGs is scheduled for final measurement.

Addressing the challenges

There were challenges noted in the first 2 years of RM implementation and a number of collaborative efforts are under way to address them.

a) Revalidating/updating the RMs

The RMs are annually updated and enhanced through the collaboration of various stakeholders. A series of consultation meetings are conducted to further refine, revalidate and update the contents of the RMs. Issues in the quality of identified indicators and baseline data deficiencies are discussed and addressed during the updating.

b) Cascading the RMs to the regions

Contributing to the PDP, regional development plans (RDPs), which reflect the development strategies and thrusts of the regions, are also prepared by the NEDA regional offices in the 15 regions in the country. With the introduction of the national RMs, the need for a similar instrument to monitor the progress of the RDPs gave rise to the formulation of the regional results matrices (RRMs). Similar to the national RMs, the

RRMs are aligned with the national RMs and contain indicators, baseline information, end-of-plan targets and responsible agencies, and these are measured at the regional level. As the Regional Development Committees prepare their RDPs, they are now required to also prepare their own RRM. These RRM shall then be linked with the national RMs as input to reports prepared at the national level.

c) Linking the RM with the STR and SER

As the Plan's primary M&E instrument, the RMs serve as the basis for the NEDA and the National Statistical Coordination Board in preparing the Socio-Economic Report (SER) and the Statistical Indicators on Philippine Development Report, respectively. These reports document the annual accomplishments and achievements made by the government based on priorities laid out in the PDP. Likewise, reporting on the accomplishments of the government through the President's State of the Nation Technical Report (STR) is also based on the PDP-RM targets. There is an ongoing initiative between the Office of the President, the DBM and NEDA to come up with a harmonised reporting template responding to the data needs of the abovementioned oversight agencies which shall be used in future STRs.

Conclusion

Albeit challenges, the government is continuing to move forward with reforms and initiatives to integrate results-orientation in PSM. The first step toward achieving a results-based management system in government has been taken and efforts are under way to fully institutionalise results in PSM with the cooperation and support of all stakeholders.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CSO	civil society organisation
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
GPH	Government of the Philippines
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PDP-RM	Philippine Development Plan results matrix
PSM	public sector management
RDP	regional development plan
RM	results matrix
RRM	regional results matrix
SER	socio-economic report
STR	State of the Nation Technical Report

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An Integrated Approach to Project Reporting



The High Value Agriculture Project in Hill and Mountain Areas (HVAP) is a market-led initiative that seeks to provide income and employment benefits to poor smallholders, landless rural inhabitants and agribusiness entrepreneurs through the development and upgrading of pro-poor value chains in the Mid- and Far-Western Development Regions of Nepal. Started in

Definition of a value chain

A sequence of productive processes, from the provision of specific inputs for a particular product /service to primary production, transformation, marketing and distribution to final consumption. The organisational arrangements involved in value chains include linking and coordinating the producers, processors, merchants/traders and distributors.

July 2010, the project follows inclusive business and value chain development approaches. The Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) is the executing agency, and the project partners include the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and Agro-Enterprise Centre (AEC). (For more information, please visit the project webpage at <http://www.hvap.gov.np/>)

There are two different approaches for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the HVAP project: the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) standard, and IFAD's Results and Impact Management System (RIMS). As both are based on causal linkages (cause and effects) between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts, HVAP has complemented IFAD's RIMS with the DCED standard's approach to develop value chain-specific result chains. The RIMS output and outcome indicators (levels 1 and 2) are quite broad, and there is space to accommodate most of the service market output and outcome indicators devised by the DCED standard. For HVAP, service market outputs can be broadly categorised under (i) establishment of commercial linkages and (ii) building capacity of business service providers. Service market outcomes, on the other hand, are aimed at capturing changes in the enterprise behaviour brought about by improved performance of the business service providers. Most RIMS indicators related to effectiveness and sustainability provide information on service market outcomes. HVAP selected additional DCED indicators to capture the changes in the market system (such as volume of transactions at producer, group/cooperative, collection centre and major market level).

Background

The September 2011 review mission recommended that a result measurement system be devised to capture market dynamics as well as social indicators outlined in the RIMS. Subsequently, the project did a comparison between RIMS and DCED. Key indicators revealed that neither could deliver an appropriate measurement of project results. The project integrated the two approaches to design a single M&E system. The RIMS element ensures reporting as per standardised RIMS indicators. While the RIMS impact indicators are more aligned to the Millennium Development Goals, the DCED impact indicators help capture and add information on market penetration or job creation, scale of production and other business-related measures. The DCED standard approach, which is focused on measuring private sector impact (partnerships, capacity building of value chain actors and enterprises), therefore provides a complementary element.

Results and impact management system (RIMS)

In February 2003, IFAD's Governing Council called upon the Fund to establish a comprehensive system for measuring and reporting on the results and impact of IFAD-supported country programmes. RIMS helps promote a vision of M&E as an instrument for managing impact. RIMS is primarily focused at the household level and correctly tracks higher level changes (e.g., household asset, child malnutrition) as well as other changes that are specifically related to project activities.

Definition of a results chain

The casual sequence of the development intervention, which stipulates the necessary order of actions for achieving the desired objectives—beginning with input, moving through activities and outputs, culminating in outcomes, impacts and feedback.

Donor committee enterprise development (DCED Standard)

The DCED is a forum where donors, foundations and United Nations agencies that work on private sector development share their practical experience and lessons learned, identify good practice and present innovations. It developed the DCED standard for results measurement in order to enable programmes to better manage interventions and estimate their results in a credible and practical way. The DCED standard provides a practical framework whereby programmes can monitor their progress towards their objectives, according to existing good practices. It is based on the use of detailed results chains to make explicit the linkages between activities and changes that need to happen in a particular sequence. It offers project management the chance to articulate the complex logic behind the design presented in the logframe. The standard also requires auditing of M&E processes and findings by qualified experts.

Components of the DCED standard

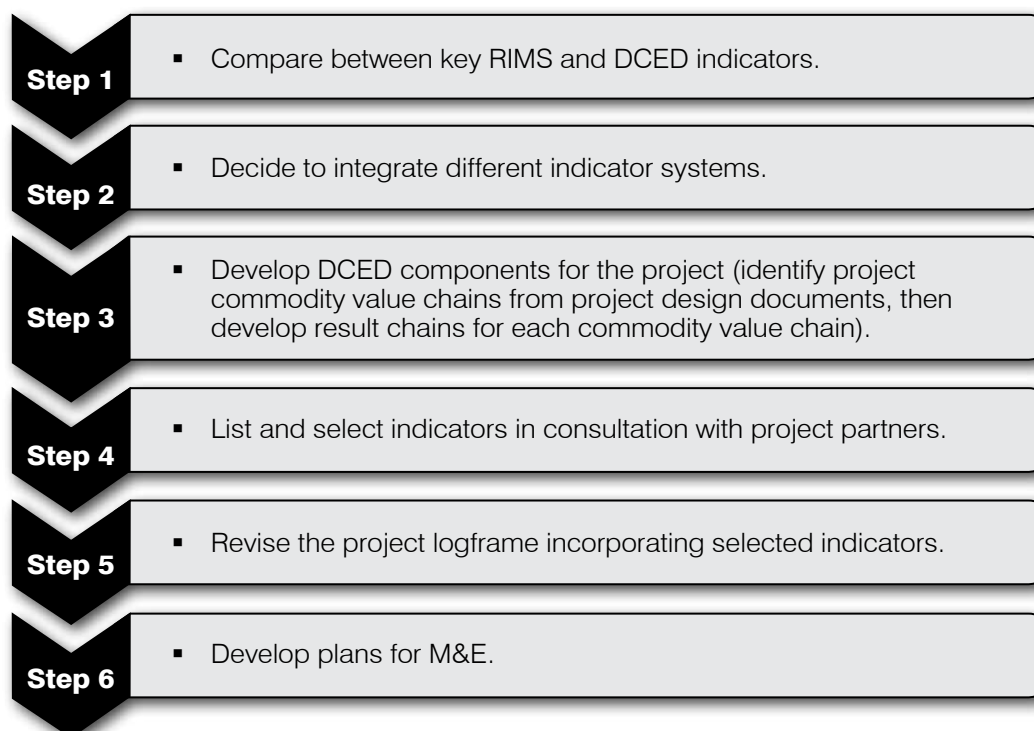
- Results chain
- Indicators of change and projections
- Measurement of indicators
- Attribution
- Capturing wider change in the system or market
- Relating impacts to programme costs
- Reporting results
- Results measurement system for management



Process of integration

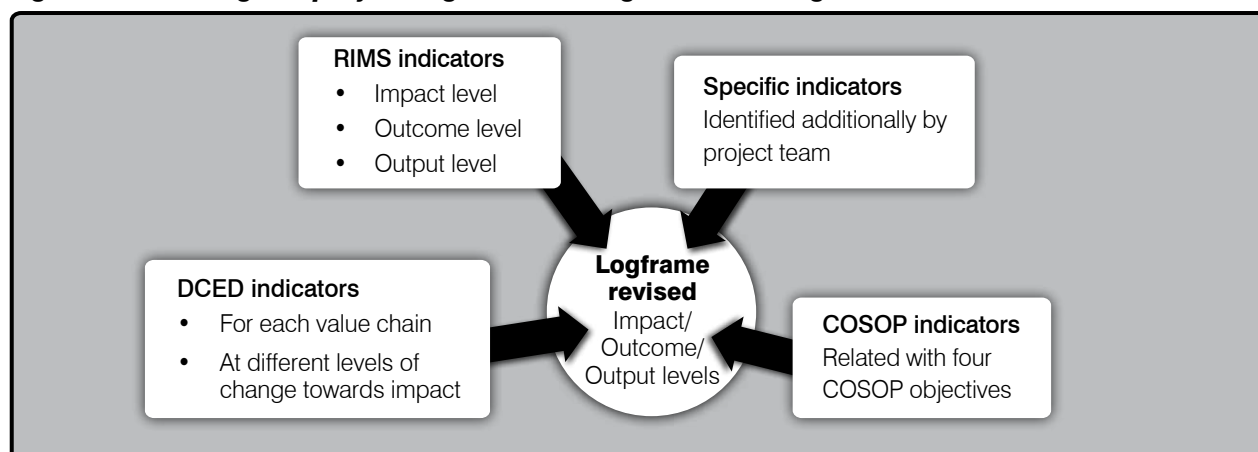
The DCED standard approach was integrated with RIMS to constitute a single M&E system. The DCED standard measures the impact of project intervention at household and enterprise levels, while the RIMS measures impact at the household level. For purposes of the project, impact indicators were combined to cover (i) income, (ii) additional jobs, (iii) scale of production, (iv) child malnutrition and (v) asset ownership. For output and outcome indicators, most of the RIMS indicators can be aligned with value-chain-specific indicators.

The following steps were carried out in order to design a single M&E system:



So far, the project has revised the logframe indicators by integrating results chain, COSOP, RIMS and specific project indicators, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Revising the project logframe: listing and selecting different indicators.



Key elements of the unified M&E system

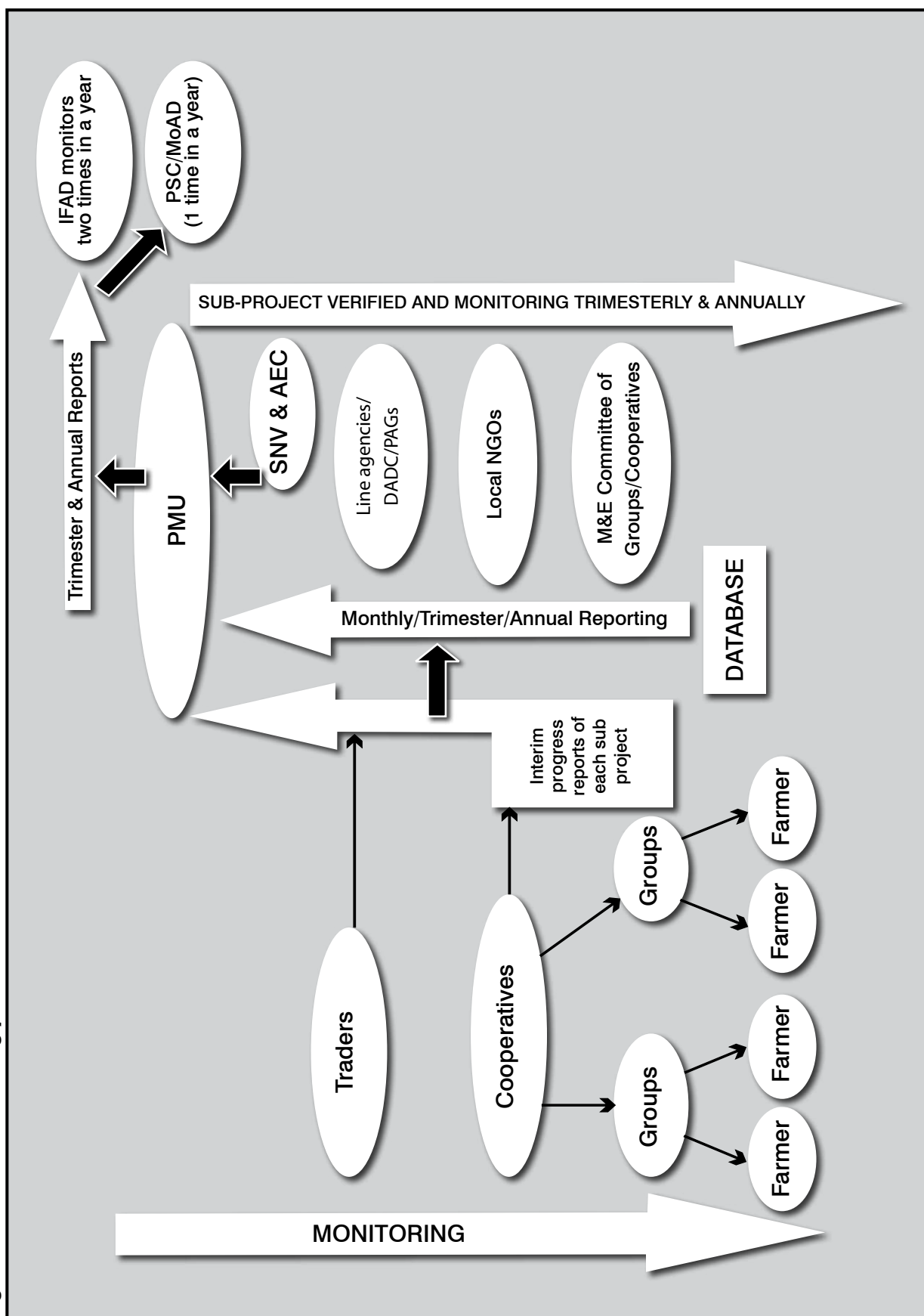
Result monitoring plan



A plan was designed to monitor and measure project interventions. The HVAP provides the grant fund to the value chain actors (input suppliers, producers, collectors, processors, agri-businesses, etc.) based on their business plan. Every grant recipient has to submit a report to the Project Management Unit (PMU) quarterly and annually. Also, grant recipients submit the report to local non-government organisations (NGOs), which collect the reports and enter the district-level data in the online reporting system. The line agencies, local NGOs and partner organisations (SNV and AEC) also submit the report to the PMU quarterly and annually. The M&E Unit then compiles the reports and publishes them annually. The PMU submits the reports to the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and IFAD quarterly and annually.

At the community level, each group and cooperative have their own M&E committee. They monitor individual farmer activities and submit reports at their group meetings. The local NGOs also carry out input/output monitoring. Line agencies and project partners also monitor the project activities, basically focusing on process monitoring. Based on the monitoring reports, progress reports, and field visit reports of the partners, the PMU validates and registers progress with programme activities. IFAD carries out monitoring and supervisory actions twice a year, through the supervision and implementation support mission. Project Steering Committee (PSC) members monitor project activities once a year. Figure 2 provides an overview of the key actors in the result monitoring plan.

Figure 2. Result monitoring plan.



Result evaluation plan

The results of the project will be observed and evaluated every year through the annual outcome survey based on project indicators. The effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability of the project interventions will be covered mainly in mid-term and final evaluations. The project will evaluate its impact based on measurements before and after HVAP interventions and at two levels: farm level (direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries), and cooperative/enterprise level. The results of the project will be updated yearly using the Standard IFAD Monitoring and Evaluation Sheet, RIMS and DCED standard result chain sheets. The evaluation timeline is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Result evaluation plan.

Activity	Year						Remarks
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Baseline survey (apple, ginger, vegetable seeds)							Combine RIMS and value chain
Baseline survey (OSV, Timur, goat meat, turmeric)							"
Baseline survey (value chains X, Y, Z)							"
Annual outcome survey							Combine RIMS and value chain
Mid-term evaluation							
Final evaluation							

Source: HVAP M&E System Manual

Baseline study

The project has combined the baseline survey assessments for RIMS and value chains. The value chain survey provides required information regarding (value chain) actors and their performance. Almost all project indicators are covered by these two surveys so there is no need to undertake a new baseline study for the comprehensive monitoring system. The project has conducted baseline surveys on three value chains: apple, ginger and vegetable seeds. A summary of the process is provided in (see Box).

The project has a list of 12 prioritised value chains. A total number of 120 respondents (four clusters or pockets/value chains, with 30 respondents per cluster) were selected to be interviewed in each value chain and RIMS baseline. The total number of respondents will reach 1,440 in all 12 value chains. The survey tools—questionnaires (producer and trader), focus group discussion (cooperative, group, market management committee) and RIMS baseline questionnaires (IFAD standard)—were developed. A respondent stratification exercise was undertaken in each pocket/cluster prior to the interviews, preferably using participatory socio-economic well-being assessment tools. Consistent with the stratification requirements, samples consisted of respondents representing at least four economic strata (ultra-poor, moderately poor, near poor and above poor).

Conclusion

HVAP is the second IFAD project in Asia and the Pacific to adopt the DCED standard to capture the results of the project at different household and enterprise levels. The HVAP has developed and implemented a single M&E system by integrating the different indicators: RIMS, COSOP, DCED standard, and project specific.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AEC	Agro-Enterprise Centre
AWPB	annual work plan and budget
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CPE	country programme evaluation
DADC	District Agriculture Development Committee
DCC	District Development Committee
DCCI	District Chamber of Commerce and Industry
DCED	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DCEDS	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development standard
DFO	District Forest Office
GIS	geographical information system
HVAP	High Value Agriculture Project in Hill and Mountain Areas
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	management information system
MoAD	Ministry of Agricultural Development
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
OSV	off-season vegetables
PAG	Public Audit Group
PCCG	Project Coordination and Consultative Group
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SIMES	Standard IFAD Monitoring and Evaluation Sheet
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation

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Annual Outcome Surveys (AOS)

What is an Annual Outcome Survey?



IFAD has developed a standard methodology for impact measurement, the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS), which includes the organisation of mandatory, standard impact surveys called RIMS impact surveys (<http://www.ifad.org/operations/rims/index.htm>). However, these impact surveys are not providing the type of results-based information that can allow project management teams to take timely, corrective action during the course of project implementation. Such impact surveys are primarily intended to document the impact of the project once the project is completed.

In an effort to shift the focus from impact documentation at the end of project stage to measuring outcomes during project implementation, IFAD is now encouraging all its projects in the Asia and the Pacific region to

survey on an annual basis a small sample of beneficiaries. This is done to

1. measure more regularly the positive or negative changes/outcomes taking place at the household level,
2. provide early evidence of project success or failure,
3. provide timely performance information so that corrective action can be taken, and
4. assess targeting efficiency.

What is an annual outcome survey?

The annual outcome survey (AOS) is a simple household survey that is undertaken annually by project staff and that covers a small sample of 200 randomly selected households.

The survey is normally conducted in villages targeted by the project to receive project interventions. It will typically include both project beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries. The latter are used as a control group, providing a basis for comparison and control. This helps the project management team to filter out other explanations for project outcomes. For instance, if 50% of targeted households report increases in yields, one would want to know if this is due to better weather conditions or is this the result of higher crop prices? But if it was known that the control group's yield was only 15%, the better weather explanation can be ruled out.

While it would be ideal if all IFAD-funded projects would be able to regularly collect and analyse outcome and impact information from their entire beneficiary population (for example through participatory M&E or census-based surveys), one also needs to recognize that this is unrealistic and difficult to manage.

The survey is expected to take no more than 3 months (typically, it has taken about 1 month) and can be implemented by project staff and extension officers, with or without external support.

How and when is the survey conducted?

It is useful to conduct AOS from the second year of implementation onwards. The survey should be undertaken in conjunction with qualitative assessments that would thereby complement the household-level data, providing information on 'why' and 'how' some outcomes were or were not achieved. To generate such data, in addition to the household interviews, the team should conduct focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the survey design. Field data collection teams will go to 20 villages. In each village, they will conduct 10 household survey interviews as well as focus group discussions and/or key informant interviews. The number of qualitative interviews to be conducted is determined by the project (Figure 1).

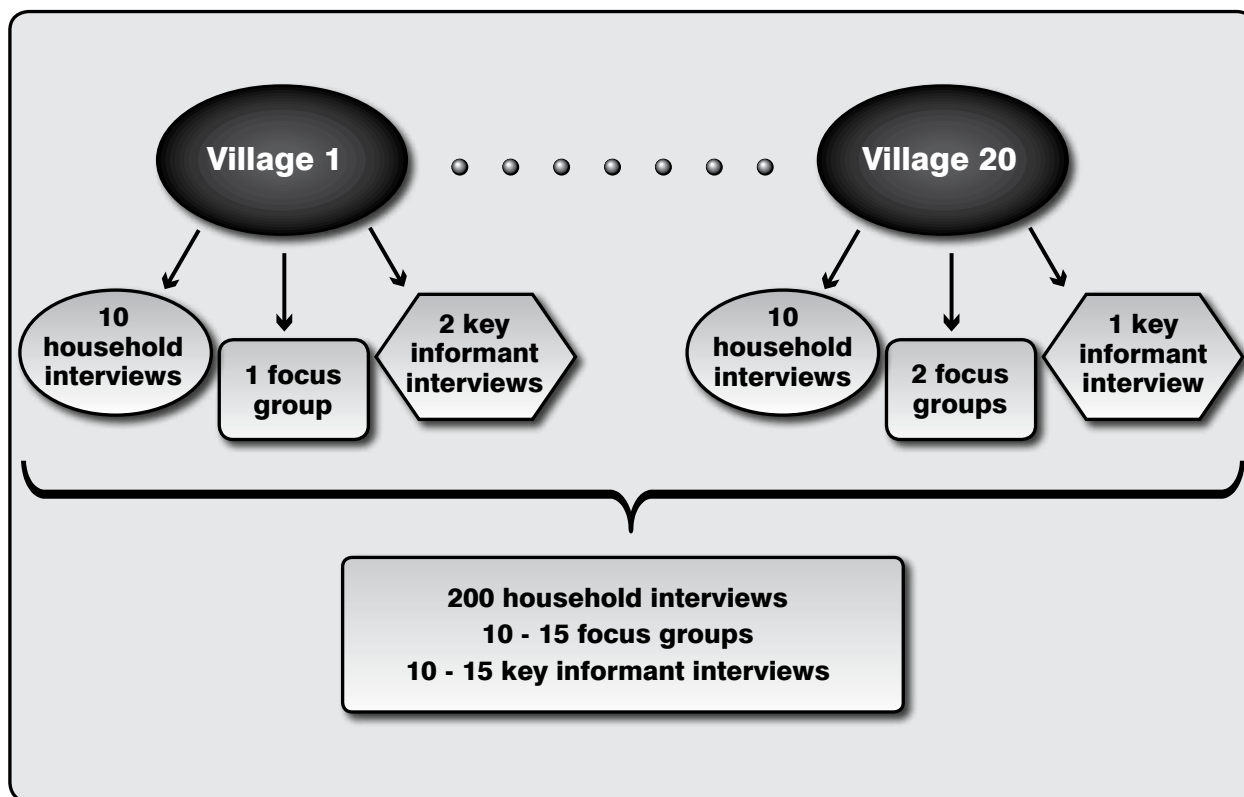


Figure 1. A typical survey design for an AOS.

In the first year an AOS is conducted, it might be better that focus group discussions and key informant interviews are conducted after the survey is completed and the results are analysed. The initial findings may reveal certain problem areas or unexpected outcomes, which can be further analysed in focus group discussions using qualitative methods/tools. For example, if the survey results show that 95% of farmers are unsatisfied with project services, one may want to organise focus group discussions with beneficiary farmers to understand the reasons for the dissatisfaction.

Conducting an annual outcome survey

A standard AOS questionnaire can be accessed on the IFAD website under the “Collections tab” (<http://asia.ifad.org>). This questionnaire may be adapted and fine-tuned to reflect project objectives and the unique characteristics of project target beneficiaries.

Below is a brief guideline describing a step-by-step approach for conducting an AOS.

Table 1. Step-by-step overview of the AOS process.

	Activity/step	Estimated duration	Comments	Responsibility
Step 1	Fine-tuning of standard survey questionnaires and preparation of interview guides for qualitative assessment	1-3 days	Can take longer if questions are added or modified from the standard template	M&E officer, with inputs from component coordinators and project coordinator
Step 2	Sample selection	1-3 days	Depends on availability of reliable lists	M&E officer. Lists to be provided by project staff (villages) and local authorities (households).
Step 3	Training of enumerators and field testing of questionnaires and qualitative assessment guides	1-2 days	Training should include a session on sampling.	M&E officer and external consultant, (if any).
Step 4	Logistical planning, preparation for data collection	1-2 days		M&E officer
Step 5	Data collection	1-3 weeks	Depends on availability of cars/motorbikes	Enumerators and their supervisors
Step 6	Data entry	1-2 weeks	If an MS Excel file is used, data entry can only be conducted by one person at a time.	M&E Officer for supervision, assistant for data entry.
Step 7	Data analysis	1 week		M&E Officer with support from external consultant (if any).

	Activity/step	Estimated duration	Comments	Responsibility
Step 8	Report writing	1 week		M&E officer, with inputs from component coordinators and project coordinator/director
Step 9	Communicating and sharing results	Ad hoc		Project coordinator, M&E and KM officers

The AOS is useful to provide timely information on

- outcomes to support RIMS level 2 indicators
- initial impacts (e.g., changes in food security) for supervision reports
- outcomes for project completion reports

Reference

Technical Guidelines, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management. A tool kit for project staff, Asia Pacific Division, IFAD, Rome.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	annual outcome survey
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KM	knowledge management
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System

Paperless Surveys:

Using Mobile Phones to Administer the Annual Outcome Survey



Information and communication technology (ICT) tools—hardware such as mobile phones and software applications such as Skype—are all around us: from the simple programme in our alarm clock to tablets and personal computers. Today, even orchards are managed by programmes that predict yields based on rainfall. ICT tools have revolutionised the way we work, especially how we deal with the mountains of data that accompany large-scale development projects.

Today, there are more than 900 million mobile phones in India and even the poorest households have mobile access. The Uttarakhand Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalaya (ULIPH) saw this ICT expansion as an opportunity for improving the standard survey methodology used for the annual outcome survey (AOS).

Data collection for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) takes a great deal of time, staff hours and resources. When seeking to measure and compare the impact of interventions, quantitative data are very useful for providing hard evidence and demonstrating trends. Surveys are the most often chosen tool to collect these data. The idea was to try to simplify this massive undertaking by administering the surveys digitally, which allows for collection and processing of data in real time, while the survey was being conducted. The developed software application eliminated some of the conventional limitations associated with remote data collection and M&E but also introduced new challenges (e.g., no physical paper proof of the survey).



The Uttarakhand Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalaya has been implemented since October 2004 by the Government of Uttarakhand, India, with financial support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It seeks to improve the quality of life and incomes of disadvantaged households in a sustainable manner by promoting improved livelihood opportunities and strengthening of local institutions. The principle of self-help is central to the approach, which focuses on empowering self-help groups (SHG) and developing community institutions. It provides a range of support services and linkages for the development of multiple sources of livelihood and access to markets.

Annual outcome survey

The annual outcome survey is a tool used by IFAD to assess the outcomes of its project interventions. It is conducted annually and, in ULIPH, it was done in selected villages, including project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (as control group). Villages and households are chosen randomly by project staff, making sure that all intervention areas are included while preserving the wider applicability of the results. Indicators are staggered across beneficiary and non-beneficiary households and are content-specific (e.g., marine resources are not applicable in the context of Uttarakhand). Some of the indicators include female-headed households, participation in project activities, livelihoods, food security, land tenure, agricultural production and irrigation, access to markets, access to rural financial services, enterprise development and employment as well as access to natural resources. The final report compares the data from project beneficiary households and non-project beneficiary households to demonstrate the impact of the intervention. Also, a comparison is made with the survey results of the previous years, which provides indication of the trend in the development of the project, the sustainability of benefits and impact multiplier effects.

Traditional AOS

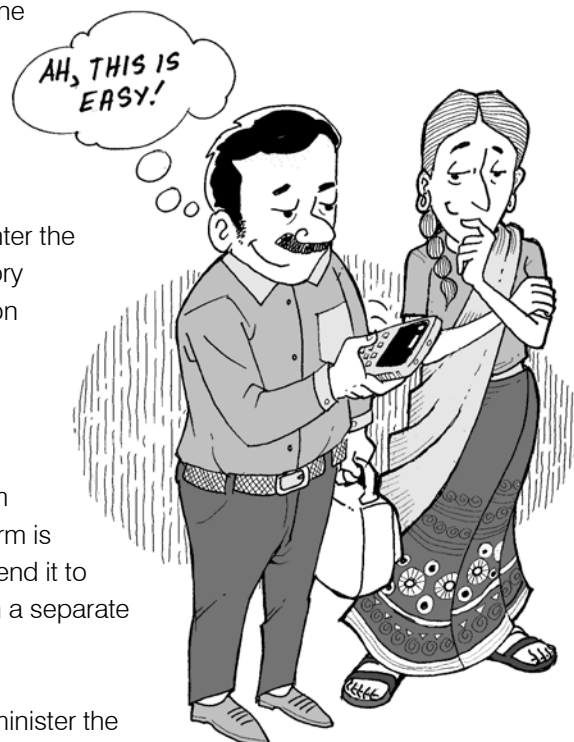
The faced the challenge of measuring the impact of its activities, spread across 959 villages and 3,962 community-based organisations (CBOs). ULIPH has been administering the AOS since 2010, using standard methodology. Paper questionnaires were filled out by trained surveyors during village visits. The completed surveys were brought to the project offices and coded, by typing the information into Microsoft Excel. The next steps involved checking data integrity, conducting an analysis, preparing tables and charts, followed by the writing of a report. It took quite a long time to complete a single survey (approximately 1 month), and it involved a lot of paper, staff hours and additional transport costs. During the transfer of data from the paper survey to the digital excel spreadsheet, inevitably mistakes were made that required additional cross-checking and extra work.

The innovation of web-based AOS

The difference between the standard AOS and new web-based AOS is in the delivery method and in the analysis. All of the usually very cumbersome tasks—filling out paper questionnaires, transporting and coding questionnaires, and finally aggregation of data and analysis—are automated. A web-based, real-time application was developed and was piloted during 2012 on a sample of 100 households. The results were used to introduce some user-friendly improvements (like the drop-down menus, or fine-tuning of some of the indicators) to be implemented in the subsequent AOS. The application is compatible with any web-enabled mobile phone and tablet (both are low-cost devices, easy to handle and transport). This software application provides a platform to deliver data in real time into a database on a remote server. (See box on the next page for technical details.)

The first step when the surveyor visits the household is to enter the fixed background information (country, state, district, category and year). Based on this information, the software application automatically assigns a unique ID number or code for each household. The starting time and household ID are locked and saved. The surveyor starts filling out the AOS survey by opening the form for the first indicator (e.g., land tenure). When the surveyor completes the first form, the second form is automatically opened and so on, until the last indicator form is completed. The surveyor can review the entire survey and send it to the server. The data for each form are saved by indicators in a separate line in the data table.

Each surveyor is required to log in before he or she can administer the survey, making it easy to trace and monitor progress. The fields for all the indicators are filled in by selecting the answer from a drop-down menu, which reduces data-typing errors. The application also captures additional information, including an image of the person or household being surveyed, the social and economic category, education level, number of family members, etc.

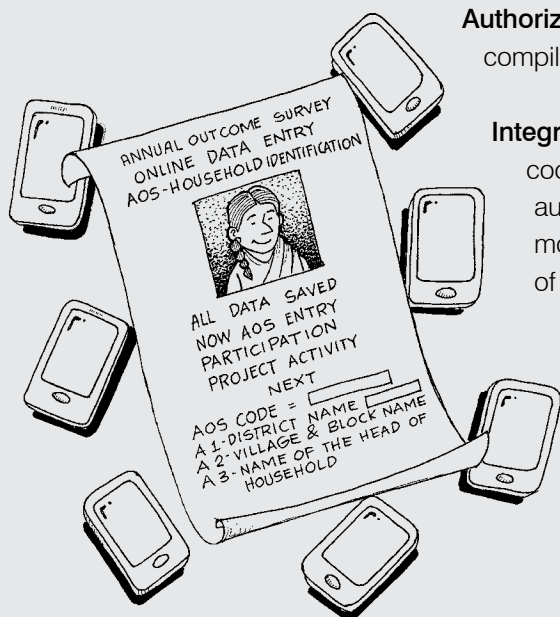


Software: Technical details

Various open-source software that are readily available have been used to develop the application. The Linux operating system is used for hosting the website. Apache is an open-source web server compatible with PHP and My-SQL. PHP is a software application used for operating servers and also for coding. My-SQL is a multithread, multiuser structured query language (SQL) database management system, used as a backdoor for accessing the database. We also include HTML5 and CSS3 to provide compatibility across multiple hardware devices. Unicode gives various choices for selecting multiple user languages. At present, it is available only in English and Hindi, but other languages can be included.

Improved data management

Managing survey data can be plagued by serious challenges at every step of data collection, processing and analysis. Due to problems with storage and unauthorised access, data can be corrupted or completely lost. Furthermore, the sensitivity of personal information and privacy concerns make it a priority to ensure authorised access and prevent misuse. The online AOS application provides the following safeguards:



Authorized access – Only authorized users can access the compiled data and modify content through the webpage.

Integrity and consistency – Every survey has a unique code. Upon completing a survey, a new code is automatically generated. The survey supervisor can monitor in real time each submitted form and the location of the surveyor.

Data storage – As soon as the survey is uploaded, it is saved in a remote server.

Automated analysis – Standardised graphs and charts for data analysis can be generated automatically with the software application.

Graphs and charts are generated after the household survey is completed and can be accessed through the web by authorised users. The appropriate indicator for which the graph/chart is to be generated is selected, and the software application produces the outputs. Incomplete data sets are not included in the analysis

but can be downloaded as raw data. There is less than 5% probability that the surveyor will not have mobile network coverage at the survey site. Should this problem arise, the survey can be completed in offline mode (using a form saved in TXT/XML format) and uploaded automatically when mobile network coverage is available.

The process of conducting the survey can be monitored by the administrator in the project office (or remotely), and the information can be reviewed online. This allows real-time tracking of results as they become available. The administrator has the benefit of being able to check multiple operational and analytical aspects of the administration of the survey: who among the surveyors are currently online, which households are being interviewed, what are emerging trends in the survey and others. (See also box on previous page for improved data management.)

Development and implementation challenges

- **Defining the unique code for each household and surveyor**
The administrator defines the log-in profile for each surveyor (name and email). When the surveyor conducts the survey, his or her name and email with household key is locked in a separate table. This prevents duplication as all keys are generated automatically.
- **Form compatibility across different mobile phone devices (i.e., standardisation of font, size, menus, etc.)**
In the early versions of the software application, standard small style sheets were used, which were not compatible with different phone screen sizes. This problem was solved by employing HTML5 and CSS3 sheets for designing cross-compatible style sheets. Also, the design of the graphs and tables was fixed.
- **Language and handset compatibility**
The free text inputs cannot be saved on the My-Sql tables, and several mobile devices and tablets could not support these fonts. To address this challenge, the fonts were converted to UTF-8.

Key benefits

- Time saved
- No typing errors in data entry
- Automated statistical analysis and generated graphs and charts
- Eco-friendly surveys: less transport, paper and electricity
- Real-time monitoring and evaluation
- Mobile phones can be used for other project related tasks

Opportunities and prospects

The application can be used for any IFAD project that conducts surveys. Only minimal adaptations of the form are needed (country, district, area and some changes to the question templates). The drop down menus can also be adjusted as needed. AOS is conducted every year in IFAD-funded projects, and the application can be further developed to generate **trend analysis** across previous years. Developing software applications for quick **cross tabulation** can help shed light on the root causes behind some of the results seen in the indicators at household level (for example, correlating and weighing low scores in 'Food Security' with other indicators like 'Lack of participation in project activity', 'no source of income', 'land ownership'). It can provide the analysis of which intervention areas have the most promising potential according to specific geographic location.



Other statistical tools can be added, for example, the **T & Z tests** commonly used for verification of results from small data sets. **Global Positioning System (GPS)** can be included with the software application. GPS can track location of household and surveyors in real time. This can capture potential migration trends or displacements due to natural disasters, such as floods. (GPS is not 100 % accurate in mountainous terrain but gives very good results in low-lying areas.) The web-based survey application can also be a useful tool for other beneficiaries and stakeholders. The application can possibly be integrated in other ongoing projects by any donor, implementing agency or government department, with slight modifications. It has the potential to greatly improve feedback mechanism between field staff and headquarters, and also helps improve transparency as well as rapid monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	annual outcome survey
CBOs	community-based organisations
CSS3	cascading style sheets
GPS	global positioning system
HTML	hypertext markup language
ICT	information and communication technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PHP	hypertext preprocessor
SHG	self-help group
SQL	structured query language
TXT	text file format
ULIPH	Uttarakhand Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalaya
UTF-8	a widely used character encoding system
XML	extensible markup language

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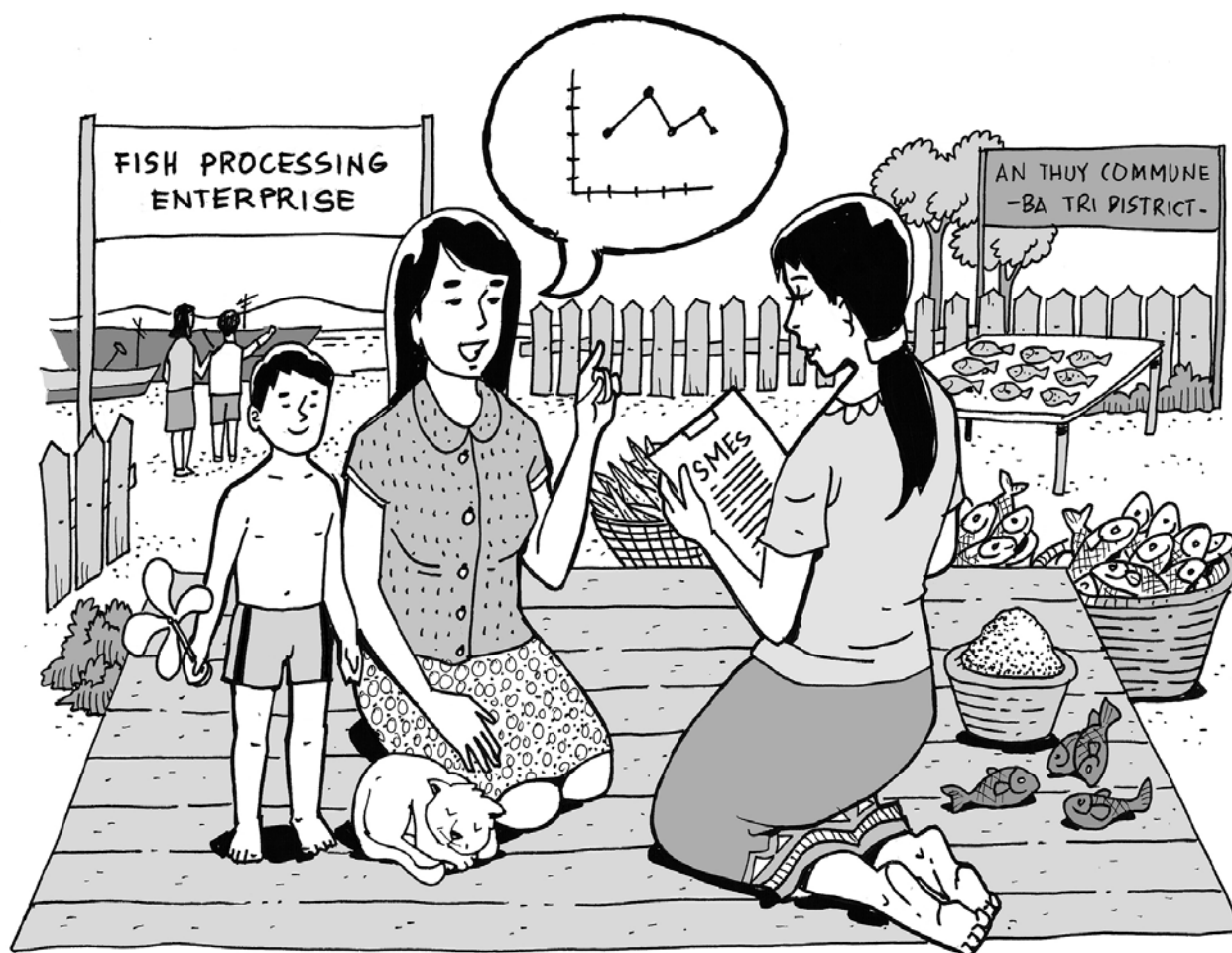
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Annual Outcome Surveys:

Assessing Impact and Enhancing Project Implementation



The Developing Business with the Rural Poor project in Ben Tre Province, Viet Nam (DBRP Ben Tre) aims to support community members who are landless or own poor-quality land by helping them to diversify their livelihood sources and increase their income. The project has been active for 4 years, working with the 50 poorest communes in eight districts in the province. The activities reach out to both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors as well as foster the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In line with IFAD Asia Division's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodology, the DBRP Ben Tre conducted an annual outcome survey (AOS) to evaluate its performance in project areas. The data generated can be used to guide the adjustment of existing project activities as well as to develop new initiatives. Because two different types of stakeholders—impoverished rural households and SMEs—had to be included in the AOS, a comprehensive review and redesign of the questionnaire was required. It involved adjustment of the approach so that it could respond to the unique data-gathering needs of each type of

stakeholder. The experience of implementing such a multi-faceted survey was very beneficial for increasing the capacity of the Provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU) and for improving the joint decision-making process with key stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Fine-tuning annual outcome surveys

The AOS are an important tool for evaluating the outcome and impact of project activities. The value of the questionnaire as a tool lies in its versatility. It provides the opportunity to gather information on a large number of indicators and to compare and contrast these data between different survey locations. Also, it can be adjusted to measure the same layers of indicators with different target groups.

DBRP Ben Tre selected 20 different indicators to assess the impact on the target groups. Due to the large number of households in the communes (average of 2,350 households per commune), the chosen survey sample exceeded the usual IFAD-prescribed survey sample of 200 households per target group. In total, 600 farming households and 240 SMEs were selected. The survey questionnaires used for SMEs were applied to the whole commune area because the number of SMEs per project cluster was too small to yield representative results. In addition, the survey was also conducted in areas where the project is not active (control groups). The data from these areas (which have a similar socioeconomic makeup with the project-supported communes) were used for comparison with the results measured in project-supported areas. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the sample size per target group, the key indicators and the time needed to administer the survey.



Table 1. Key annual outcome survey indicators.

	Sample Size	Type of Questionnaires	Key Indicators	Average duration
Households	400 in target group A	30 HHs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of income increase Percentage of agricultural productivity growth Common interest group participating in buying inputs and working and selling products together 	30 min
	160 in control group B	20 HHs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in number and volume of contracts signed with traders Increase in secured stable jobs (over 6 months) 	
Small & medium enterprises (SMEs)	200 in target group C	15 HHs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in production and business investment Increase in turnover Access to production and business development support services Increase in number of employees 	15 min
	80 in control group D	10 HHs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of rural infrastructure work and socioeconomic development plan of the commune 	

Innovation in the 2012 AOS

- Non-project areas (control groups) were also included in the survey. For each key target group, 30% of the sample was made up of households and SMEs in non-project areas, which provided a base for comparison and evaluation of the project impact in the intervention areas.
- The overall sample size was increased. The total sample size was 40% bigger than the sample used in the previous year. After the analysis of the data from the previous survey, it was decided that it was necessary to increase sample size in order to generate data that can be representative at the district level. The enlarged sample size could accommodate all of the eight project districts, allowing data to be segregated and analysed according to district. This made it possible for each District Project Management Office (DPMO) to draft individual AOS reports.
- The AOS was extended to include also SMEs (not just households). In the course of the implementation of project activities, it was noted that the impact on the SME target group needed to be studied more closely. By including a separate questionnaire for this target group, the PPMU could better assess the impact (in terms of business/enterprise development).

Key findings of the DBRP AOS

Small and medium-sized enterprises

SMEs in project areas reported increased turnover, and this increase was higher than in SMEs that did not participate in the project. However, the overall percentage of SMEs that reported a decrease in turnover remained high in both areas, which attests to the unstable conditions in rural SME-driven manufacturing and other business operations. Also, employment in the surveyed SMEs has increased compared with the previous year, and project areas generally reported better numbers than non-project areas.

Rural households

Compared with the previous year, project areas have reduced their proportion of poor households. Productivity was at least 20% higher in project areas, compared with non-project areas, and the highest growth was in aquaculture. Project areas also showed a higher increase of income than the control group (66% and 51%, respectively), especially in key livelihood agricultural activities (crops, livestock and aquaculture).



Lessons learned on the use of AOS

- After the mid-term review, the AOS needs to be conducted on a mid-year basis (from May to July), so that the results can be used to develop the subsequent annual work plan.
- The content of questionnaires and the sequence of administering the forms should be closely followed in the course of administering the surveys. This will help ensure the uniformity of surveys, reduce processing and backtracking efforts and help in the analysis and comparison of results.
- The AOS cannot reflect impact in a detailed and comprehensive way. The root causes of the problems usually cannot be determined. If there are available financial and staff resources, it is advisable to complement the AOS with qualitative research tools targeted to specific themes/issues. For example, case studies can be used to assess the impact of vocational training, while the most significant changes and photo book tools can be used to measure the impact of the newly constructed rural infrastructure work.
- The capacity of project staff to conduct the AOS should be improved, especially their basic knowledge on the livelihood of rural farmers and the business operations of SMEs in the target areas. This knowledge is important for adequately adjusting survey questions to ensure better targeting and easier administration.
- Indicators can be inputted and measured immediately as soon as the completed surveys are submitted. There is no need to wait to collect all survey forms before processing commences.

- Transport costs can be reduced by administering combined surveys and by improved planning of enumerator survey routes.
- The impact of the credit and capacity building for SMEs could be assessed in terms of easily comparable indicators, such as increases in job creation for rural youth.

Conclusion

Due to its flexibility, the AOS tool can be adapted to the projects' information needs and thereby helps project managers effectively steer decision-making processes to strengthen project performance and better achieve the objectives for the following years. Evaluation of the support activities aimed at helping the rural poor sustainably overcome poverty; AOS was effective in revealing the extent of the positive impact of the project activity.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	annual outcome survey
CDB	commune development board
DBRP Ben Tre	Developing Business with the Rural Poor in Ben Tre province, Viet Nam
DPMO	District Project Management Office
HHs	households
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PPMU	Provincial Project Management Unit
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises

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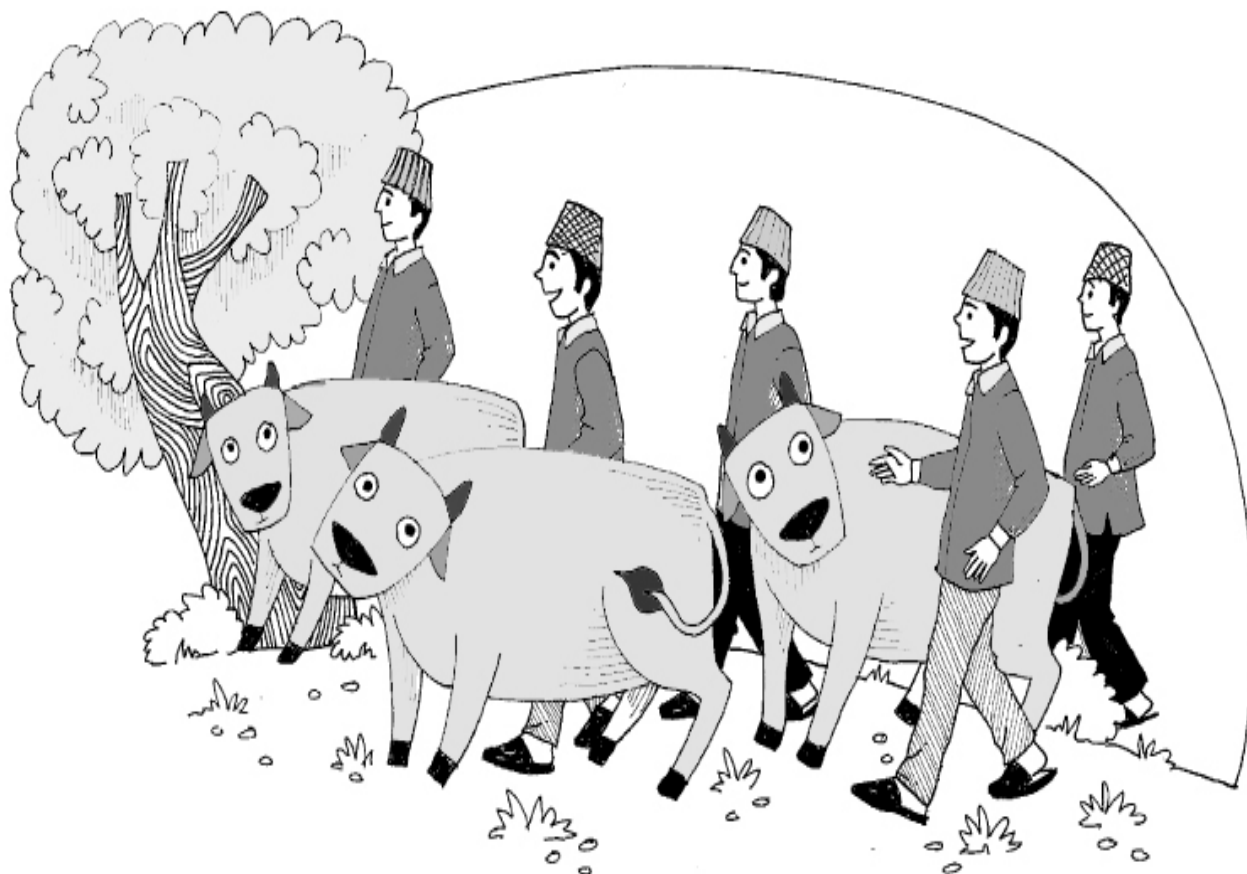
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Annual Outcome Survey:

An Effective Tool for Project Management



The Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme (LFLP) has been implemented by the Government of Nepal under the Department of Forests (DOF) and the Department of Livestock Services, with financial support from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) in 22 districts of Nepal since 2005. The 8-year programme has the overall goal of achieving 'a sustained reduction in poverty of 44,300 poor households' through increased production of forest products and livestock. The programme has four components:

- leasehold forestry and group formation,
- livestock development,
- rural financial services, and
- programme management and coordination.

Monitoring, as is well known, is an integral part of a project cycle. However, often, programme and project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems focus more on tracking the annual plan of activities (i.e., output-focused) and are not capturing result-level data and information (looking at outcomes). Outcome-level monitoring is necessary for tracking project results and guiding further planning and decision-making efforts.

Based on the past recommendations of IFAD missions and various discussions, LFLP started using “outcome monitoring” as an annual activity in 2010. The outcome monitoring study was conducted in a participatory manner. The concept was customised based on the LFLP’s logical framework and local contexts. The methodology was reviewed with the LFLP team as well as with IFAD’s supervision mission team. A 10% sampling intensity was used in preparing a list of samples. A total of 352 leasehold forest user groups (LFUG) were taken as samples from a total of 3,439 LFUGs.

The results of the outcome study were shared at the central, regional and district levels. They were useful in assessing the project achievements at the outcome level against the objectively verifiable indicators of the logical framework. In the rest of the article, three aspects will be covered: (i) the approach and process of administering the survey, (ii) the main findings and (iii) the approach to sharing the results of the outcome survey with a wide range of audiences.

Administering the Annual Outcome Survey

The annual outcome survey (AOS) was conducted by involving the concerned stakeholders and beneficiaries. The following steps highlight the process used for preparing and conducting the survey as well as for disseminating the survey findings.

Step 1. Initiating the process

LFLP adopted a participatory and consultative approach to prepare and conduct the outcome monitoring exercise. Project documents, recommendations of joint IFAD-FAO missions and feedback from the government were considered during the design of the outcome survey.

Step 2. Planning and designing the outcome survey

The M&E staff of LFLP and partner agencies jointly reviewed the relevant documents and drafted a concept note on outcome monitoring. It was subsequently finalised in consultation with the other project staff. The project logframe was referred to in developing the criteria and indicators (C&I) and in formulating the survey questionnaire. The logframe’s outcome monitoring indicators were emphasised with some adjusted modifications to fit the project context and specific needs. The guidelines developed by IFAD were customised for the specific and unique geographic context of the project. As the programme is being implemented in 22 districts across the country, it was decided that the samples would be selected to represent all districts and age groups. Accordingly, 352 sample LFUGs were chosen using stratified random sampling as shown in Table 1. The questionnaire was field-tested in two districts (Tanhunan and Makawanpur), providing valuable observations that were used to modify and improve the questionnaire.

Table 1. Total groups and sample groups, by fiscal year.

Fiscal year (Group Formation)	Total LFUGs (no.)	Sample LFUGs (10% sampling intensity) (no.)	Remarks
Bridging phase	633	78	The groups established in each fiscal year were represented, even if there were less than 10 for a particular year.
2005/06	259	24	
2006/07	531	47	
2007/08	609	62	
2008/09	724	73	
2009/10	683	68	
Total	3439	352	

Step 3. Conducting the survey

Local social mobilisation staff—e.g., group promoters and district-based supervisors —were selected as enumerators because they were familiar with the target groups and the local context. To ensure data reliability, they were trained on how to administer the pre-tested questionnaires. One staff from each District Forest Office (DFO) and District Livestock

Service Office (DLSO) were also trained along with the enumerators to strengthen further the collection of quality data. Both primary and secondary data were gathered in consultation with the staff of DFO and DLSO at the district level. The collected data were checked by staff of DFO, DLSO and technical assistance office jointly before they were sent to the LFLP centre for analysis and interpretation.



Step 4. Data analysis and interpretation

The data were entered using Microsoft Excel-based simple software for compilation, editing and analysis. These were analysed and interpreted by descriptive measures and supported by simple statistical tools (average, charts and graphs). During the data processing and result interpretation stages, programme staff and their government counterparts were also extensively consulted. The draft report was finalised after obtaining comments and feedback.

Step 5. Dissemination of survey results

The potential audiences and stakeholders with whom the survey findings would be shared were identified at the design stage. The findings were shared with policy-makers, donors and other development partners. The results of the survey were also shared with stakeholders at meetings, workshops and training events through presentations and distribution of leaflets and other printed publications.

Results and achievements

Key achievements at the outcome level

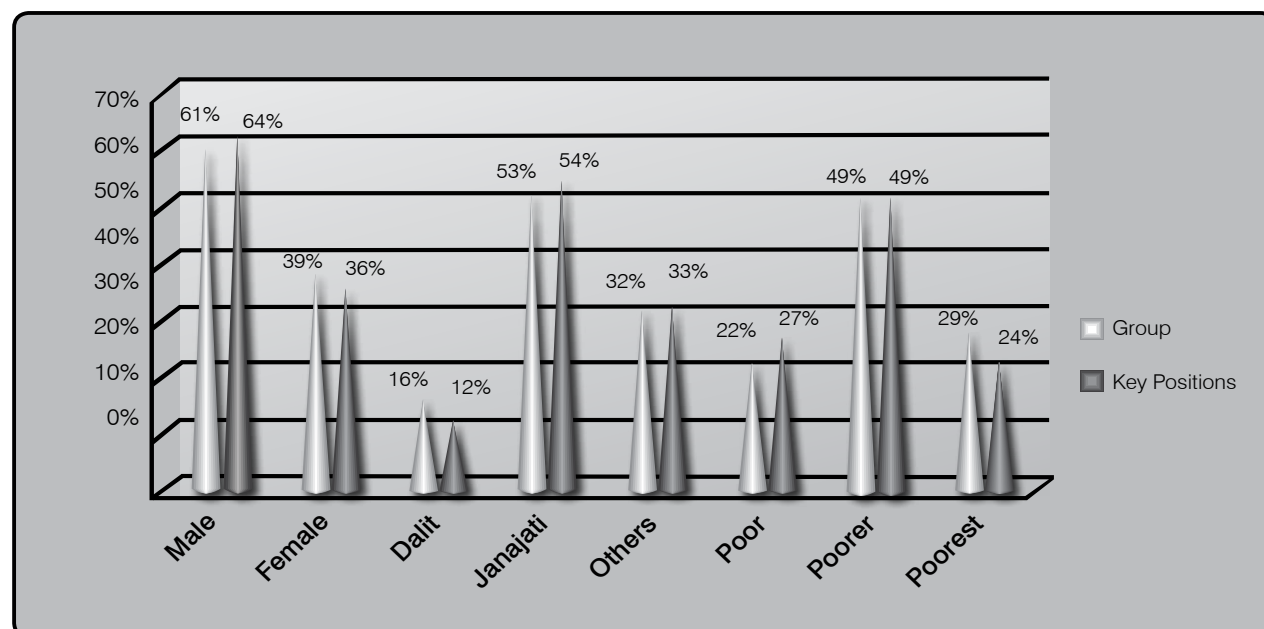
- ♦ Proportions of women, *Dalits* (untouchables), *Janajatis* (indigenous) and poorest in LFUGs were 39%, 16%, 53% and 29%, respectively.
- ♦ The proportions of female, *Dalits*, and *Janajatis* in key positions were 36%, 12%, and 54%, respectively.
- ♦ Greenery of leasehold areas increased; 38% of LFUGs reported an increase in forest cover up to 25%.
- ♦ Percentages of LFUGs that undertook weeding in 2007/08 and 2009/010 were 28% and 55% respectively; for plantations, in the same inclusive years, 23% and 36%, respectively.
- ♦ More than 75% of the LFUGs agreed that their leased forests provide for up to 50% their forage requirements and more than 80% agreed that their leased forest fulfilled one-half of their fuelwood requirements.
- ♦ The average goat herd size increased from 3 to 5. Most of the households reported cash incomes from selling their goats. 60% of LFUGs reported that livestock production had added to their annual household incomes.
- ♦ Almost 90% of the farmers participated in the monthly savings and credit scheme.
- ♦ About 76% of the LFUGs had mobilised savings for soft loans. About 60% of the reported loan amount was used for income-generating activities.

The AOS was helpful as it provided results and achievements beyond just the survey findings, most notably in the following three areas:

Participation of concerned stakeholders ensured

The survey was considered by concerned stakeholders as participatory and consultative. Project staff and government staff, from central to district levels, were involved during the process. Programme beneficiaries were consulted initially during the testing of the questionnaire and during the data collection. Enumerators were also selected from among the beneficiaries. Senior officials of the Department of Forests and the donor agency were regularly updated on the progress of the survey activity. A wide range of stakeholders was considered for dissemination of the results. The survey tried to address the concerns of IFAD as well as those of the government of Nepal by incorporating basic principles of M&E.

Figure 1. Group composition, by gender, ethnicity, and poverty.



Outcome-level results tracked

The outcome survey tracked the results of all four components of the project, namely leasehold forestry development, livestock development, rural finance promotion and coordination and management. The survey captured the progress and main achievements at the outcome level (against each of the indicators mentioned in the project's logical framework).

This survey also tracked the participation of women, indigenous people and Dalits (Untouchable - KDS), especially in the decisionmaking process. In this way, the survey provided the key information needed for improving facilitation and project planning.

Findings of AOS disseminated to stakeholders

The results of the outcome study were shared at different levels:

Sharing of preliminary findings. From the very beginning (i.e., initial data analysis), preliminary findings were shared with the LFLP team and the IFAD-FAO joint mission. Their comments and suggestions served as valuable inputs for interpreting the results and finalising the report.

Sharing of first draft report. Based on the feedback on the preliminary findings, the first draft report was prepared and then shared with the programme staff and the concerned government officials. This followed a presentation by the M&E team to gather final comments from staff members. The report was finalised by incorporating the comments during the presentation and discussions.

Producing various dissemination products. After completing the survey, the programme decided to prepare audience-specific materials for sharing or disseminating at the appropriate forum. Accordingly, the following were prepared:

- Leaflets in Nepali for sharing with community members
- PowerPoint presentations
- Summaries of results to be included in annual reports and other thematic reports
- Printed version of the outcome monitoring survey report

The outcome survey results were shared using PowerPoint presentations during regional annual planning workshops held in four of five development regions. Sharing of results in regional planning workshops helped inform senior officials from the Ministry about the project's achievements.

Leaflets prepared in Nepali language were distributed to DFOs and DLSOs of the 22 districts. The field-level implementing units of DFOs/DLSOs in turn disseminated the leaflets at beneficiary level as well. As the leaflets were in Nepali, staff as well as farmers were able to understand the results.

Printed copies of the outcome monitoring report were distributed to district, regional and central units of the government of Nepal, major donors and some NGOs/INGOs working in the forestry sector. In addition, students from colleges, independent researchers, freelancers and other people have also benefited from the circulation of the printed versions of the report.

Benefits of AOS to the programme and other stakeholders

LFLP management team: The outcome survey results have been useful for programme management. The Department of Forests and Department of Livestock Services have used the survey results in their own planning process. The areas shown to be lagging behind were prioritised by the programme for necessary input delivery and other requirements. The IFAD-FAO joint mission has also endorsed the need to use information to ensure improved planning and implementation.

District-level stakeholders: The results of the outcome survey have been useful to district-level implementing agencies, target beneficiaries as well as other stakeholders (like district and village development committees and other development partners). The survey provided them with facts and figures to improve planning.

Donors and development partners: The results of the outcome survey have been shared with government agencies (like the DOF and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation), donors, INGOs and NGOs that are supporting the development process in Nepal. They expressed interest in using the results for their own planning of future interventions. Thus, the AOS results will be useful to a wide range of stakeholders.

Lessons learned

Outcome surveys are an effective monitoring tool as it provides information about the results of a programme or project at a level higher than just project outputs.

1. As the outcome survey is carried out on an annual basis, it provides more reliable and updated information to the management team, partner government agencies, and other stakeholders. It should ideally be completed prior to the annual planning process to ensure that the findings can be used as inputs into project planning.
2. The involvement of beneficiaries, implementing agencies and other stakeholders is necessary to ensure that the survey is carried out in a participatory manner. It ensures the utilisation of survey results in programme planning and implementation, improving overall effectiveness.
3. Customising of the guidelines helps to address the local context and situations and to enhance the quality of the findings.
4. Wide sharing of the results of the outcome survey with a wide range of stakeholders is very important to ensure that results are used to inform the planning of other programmes and projects as well.

Conclusion

LFLP has taken up outcome monitoring as a useful management tool to ensure that project results and achievements are monitored and reflected in project documents and logical framework. The results of the outcome study were perceived by the stakeholders (including farmers) as reliable due to the standard methodology used and the participation of all concerned. The results were shared by producing audience-specific extension materials, including leaflets written in the local language. The AOS results were also used by the project management team during the planning process to ensure that weaknesses are addressed. Outcome monitoring can be a useful management tool for other projects and programmes used to support Nepal's development.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	Annual Outcome Survey
DFO	District Forest Office, district forest officer
DLSO	District Livestock Service Office, district livestock service officer
DOF	Department of Forests
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations
KDS	Kami Damai Sarki
LFLP	Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme
LFUG	leasehold forest user group
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
TA-LFLP	Technical Assistance for Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme

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Practitioners' Views of the Annual Outcome Survey



For the last couple of years, IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division (APR) has developed and encouraged the use of a simple household survey called the Annual Outcome Survey (AOS) in all IFAD-funded projects in the region. Although a standard methodology for impact measurement system is already in place, currently used impact surveys are primarily intended to document project impact at completion. Instead, the Annual Outcome Survey is designed to provide Project Management Teams with information so that they can take timely, corrective action during the course of project implementation.

A quick look at the Annual Outcome Survey

- It is a simple annual household survey
- Uses a random sample of 200 households
- Is conducted exclusively in project-targeted villages or those receiving project interventions
- It surveys both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
- Measures a variety of important indicators
- Can be completed in 3 months by project staff and extension officers with or without external support

The Annual Outcome Survey aims to:

1. measure more regularly the positive or negative changes/outcomes taking place at the household level
2. provide early evidence of project success or failure
3. provide timely performance information so that corrective actions may be taken if required
4. assess targeting efficiency

Use of the AOS is meant help projects gather and use information to increase project impact and performance in line with the Results Based Management (RBM) framework.

Since it is a relatively new methodology, the APR Results Based Management team wanted to know if, indeed, the intended aims of the AOS were being achieved. The division conducted a survey seeking feedback about projects' experiences with and perceptions of the:

- value of AOS;
- kind of information provided by AOS;
- time and cost of implementing AOS;
- constraints of AOS implementation; and
- practice of other types of outcome surveys.

Who were the respondents?

The feedback survey was conducted from mid-November to early December 2012 and 78 responses were received. The table below describes the types and number of respondents to the questionnaire:

Type of Respondent	Number
Country Programme Managers	5 (15%)
Country Programme Officers	9 (12%)
Project Directors	21 (27%)
Monitoring and Evaluation Officers	31 (40%)
Other staff members*	12 (6%)
TOTAL	78

* The "Other" category consists of Knowledge Management Officer, Deputy Project Director, Training and Technical officer and Associate Programme Officer.

Of the 78 total respondents, 45 had carried out one or more AOS while 33 (nearly 42% of respondents) had not. Those projects that had not yet carried out an Annual Outcome Survey, were, nevertheless, asked to respond to the questionnaire so that the APR could learn what specific obstacles and challenges they may have encountered.

What was learned?

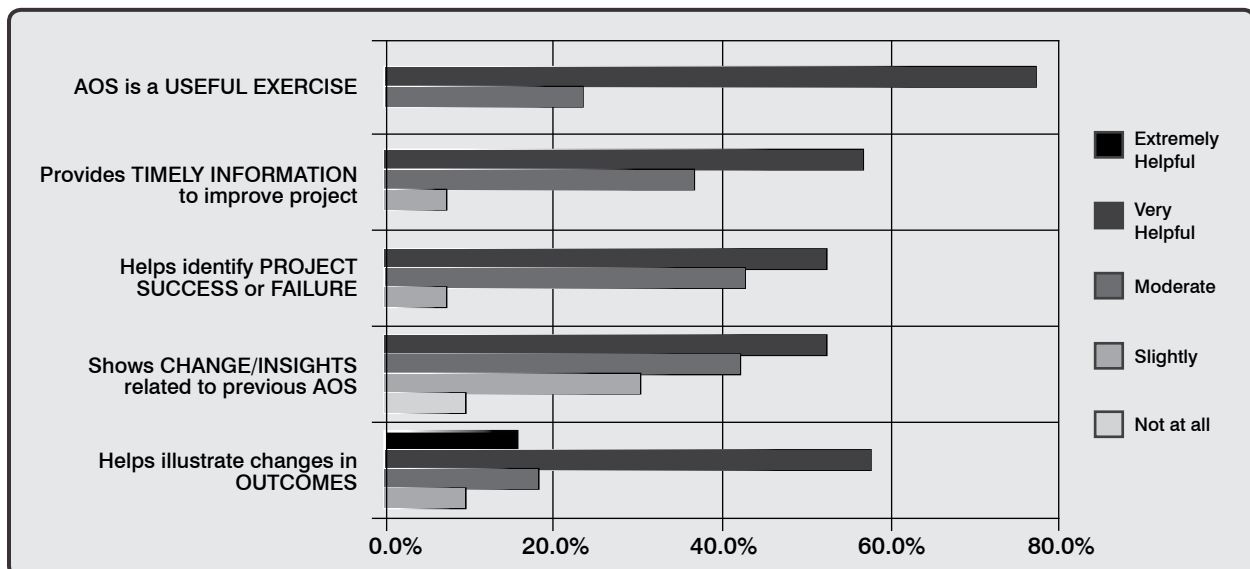
1. The Annual Outcome Survey adds value to projects

Overall, respondents that had carried out one or more Annual Outcome Survey reported very positive perceptions of its value. Of those who carried out the AOS, 19 M&E Officers and 14 Project Directors made up the majority (73%) of respondents followed by 8 CPMs and CPOs (18% of respondents) and 4 “other” respondents (9%). They were asked several questions about the value of the AOS for project management and assessment:

- Almost 75% said they found AOS to be either extremely or very helpful **as a useful tool that illustrates changes in outcomes.**
- About 52% found the AOS to be very helpful while another 42% found it to be moderately **helpful to identify project successes or failures.**
- 58% found AOS very helpful and 36% found it to be moderately helpful for **providing timely information to improve project activities.**
- An overwhelming 76% found stated AOS was a **very worthwhile exercise for the projects.** An additional 24% said that it was moderately helpful.
- **Two-thirds** of those who conducted an AOS **would carry out another one.** Project completion was the main reason given for not carrying out subsequent surveys.

The AOS was found to be **less helpful in identifying changes or insights related to previously conducted AOS.** For those that had conducted several AOS assessments, only 18% said that they found substantial changes. The questionnaire did not query what these changes or insights were, nor whether they were positive or negative. A more detailed explanation would be needed to gauge a better understanding of the kinds of changes that the repeated AOS was able to measure.

Figure1: The Added Value of AOS



On the whole, the Project Directors and M&E Officers were more enthusiastic about the value of AOS compared to the Country Programme Officers and Country Programme Managers. With the exception of the value of AOS in illustrating changes in outcomes, which was seen nearly equally as “very helpful” or “moderately helpful,” the other value dimensions were only described as “moderately helpful” by this group.

Nevertheless, all respondents said they intend to conduct subsequent AOS saying there is both significant benefit to the project and that AOS provides useful information for project reporting.

Frequency of AOS: More than 50% of the respondents stated that the AOS should be undertaken annually from the beginning of each project, followed by 27% who said that the AOS should be conducted at midterm and completion points.

2. Projects need more information, increased capacity and support in order to implement AOS

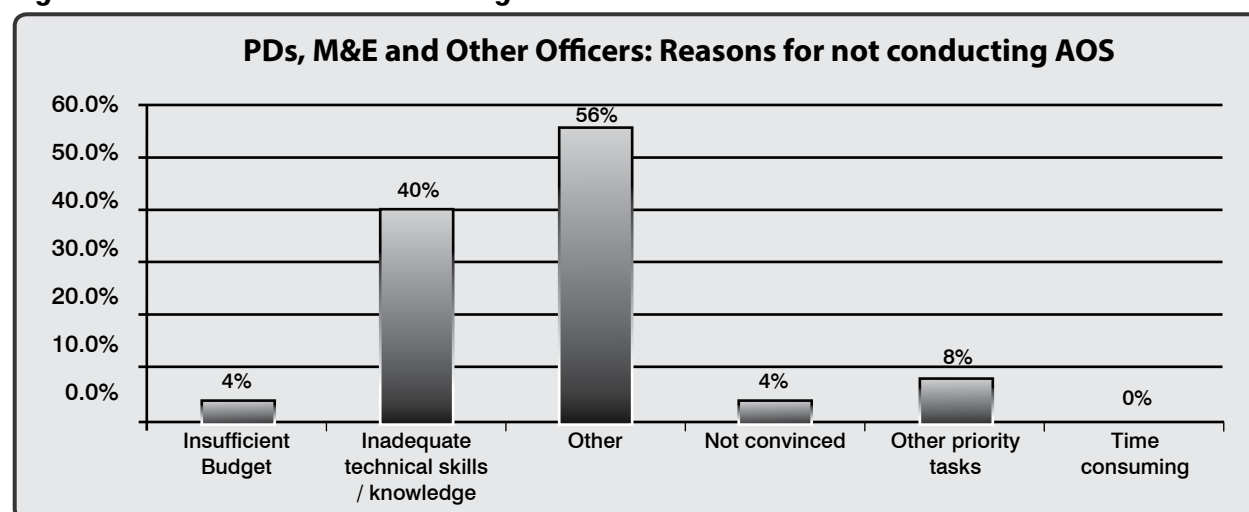
Follow-up questions were asked of the 33 respondents who had not conducted an AOS in an effort to understand why not.

The most common single problem was lack of capacity. About 40% reported that inadequate technical skills and lack of knowledge is a primary reason for not conducting the AOS. Indeed, about one third of all responding M&E officers have not received any direct formal training on AOS.

Approximately 56% responded with “other.” This category reflects a mix of reasons including inappropriate timing (projects are at start-up or closing stages so AOS cannot be conducted) and lack of appropriate staff to conduct the AOS. However, one of the main reasons provided for not having implemented AOS is the absence of M&E specialists. But even projects that have M&E Officers report that those officers are unlikely to have received the adequate training to conduct the AOS; moreover, the position tends to be subject to substantial staff turnover.

Responses from the largest group including PDs, M&E and Other officers are shown in the Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Reasons for not conducting AOS



Moreover, respondents' low level of familiarity with the Annual Outcome Survey may also be a contributing factor to its underutilization. By the end of December 2013, when the survey was conducted, 23 projects had implemented a total of 44 AOS. However, given that APR has 62 ongoing projects, about 63% of the projects had not conducted any AOS at that time.

When asked how familiar they were with AOS, more than half of project directors and M&E officers and nearly all of the CPMs and CPOs reported being either not familiar or only somewhat familiar with method.

Those who answered that they were either not familiar or somewhat familiar commented that they had not received any formal training in AOS or have not been directly involved in its implementation. Their exposure to AOS is due to reading technical guides or being briefed by colleagues who have been trained.

3. The time needed to complete the AOS met expectations

Overall, almost 80% of respondents are satisfied with the time taken to conduct AOS. On average, it took respondents approximately 2-3 months to complete an Annual Outcome Survey. This duration is in line with the time foreseen in the AOS technical manual. However, the time spent on each of the various steps varied widely from the guidelines provided in the AOS manual.

Another project reported that the duration of the AOS is dependent on several factors including the sample size, accessibility of study area, availability of the respondents, number of support staff to complete data entry, and availability of data analysis programmers, etc. Projects that covered a large number of districts reported that administration of the AOS took 4 to 6 months.

A key activity to be factored into the time needed to conduct AOS, is sharing and disseminating survey findings among project staff and other relevant stakeholders. Almost 50% of the respondents held at least 3 events designed to share AOS results. Other useful steps that are not necessarily mentioned in the AOS manual, but were brought up in the survey are time needed for translation and "approval from authorities."

4. Cost effectiveness of AOS is only moderately satisfactory

The cost to conduct the AOS varies significantly. According to the India Country Office that shared its experience in conducting the AOS (and as also mentioned in the AOS manual), "the average cost for conducting such surveys was roughly USD 4,600 (taking into account of extreme cost of USD 20,556 for one project). That one outlier excluded, the average cost was below USD 3,000." The lowest cost to conduct the AOS was USD 550 and the highest spending was USD 20,000.

Overall, the majority of respondents (67%) were only moderately satisfied with the cost effectiveness of the AOS, some (27%) were highly satisfied and only a few projects were unsatisfied.

Some respondents indicated that M&E resource or budget constraints prevented them from carrying out AOS.

5. Projects continue to practice other types of outcome surveys

Respondents that had not conducted the AOS were asked follow-up questions to understand what obstacles they encountered and to discover whether other tools have been used to understand project outcomes.

Indeed, the majority of those not using AOS reported using alternative means to measure project outcomes. The most common tools used by respondents to measure outcome are: baseline surveys, midterm and completion point surveys, secondary data, focus groups, short term impact assessment studies, case studies, own outcome questions, current M&E indicators, field monitoring visits, workshops, progress reports, meetings with target groups.

It was also found that 60% of respondents who have carried out the AOS also continue to use additional tools to measure outcomes.

The respondents that have conducted AOS but have not introduced additional tools to measure outcomes reported that the primary constraint they face is the lack of technical knowledge and staff capacity within the PMU.

Conclusion and recommendations

Overall 100% of the respondents said that the AOS is worthwhile exercise for their projects. Indeed the majority of the respondents perceived AOS to be a valuable exercise that helps in meeting the intended objectives of AOS:

- measure more regularly the positive or negative changes/outcomes taking place at the household level
- provide early evidence of project success or failure
- provide timely performance information so that corrective actions may be taken if required
- assess targeting efficiency

In order to strengthen and scale up the use of AOS at project and country levels and ensure that projects continue to measure outcomes to increase project success, it is recommended that:

- AOS training should be provided to increase the capacity of all relevant stakeholders and not just of Project Directors and M&E Officers.
- Effective capacity development should focus on opportunities to strengthen staff members' data analysis and writing skills in order to reduce some of the time needed to complete AOS.
- M&E costs specifically related to AOS should be earmarked in all new project budgets.
- Further analysis should be conducted to understand how the use of additional outcome measures could complement the findings of an AOS.
- Staff increase their use of knowledge management systems and the implementation of the online site to help disseminate knowledge about AOS. Knowledge sharing might include workshops, case studies, sharing of experiences and results of actual AOS reports with project staff.

- The AOS technical guide be updated to fit new time averages and cost elements, and experiences of those that have conducted AOS.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AOS	Annual Outcome Survey
APR	Asia and the Pacific Division
CPMs	Country Programme Managers
CPOs	Country Programme Officers
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PDs	Project Directors
PMU	Programme Management Unit
RBM	Results Based Management
USD	United States dollars

Bio-sketches and contact details

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Most Significant Change Stories (MSC)



Most Significant Change Stories to Capture Achievements and Lessons



The Most Significant Change (MSC)¹ technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved, both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. MSC may be used at different levels.

- It can be used as a form of monitoring because it can occur throughout the programme cycle and provide information to help people manage the programme.

¹ The MSC technique was invented by Rick Davies in an attempt to meet some of the challenges associated with monitoring and evaluating a complex participatory rural development program in Bangladesh, which had diversity in both implementation and outcomes.

- It can contribute to an evaluation need because it provides data on outcomes and impact of relevance to programme performance and lessons.
- It can be used for documentation and communication purposes because it provides a series of outputs (stories) that might be of interest to a specifically identified target audience.

The process involves the collection of stories emanating from the field and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories and have a discussion about the value of these reported changes against a defined set of criteria. These can be predefined or finalised in the course of the discussion. The first one might be more structured, the second more focused. The selection panel arrives at a consensus of why they consider them significant. When the technique is implemented well, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on programme outcomes and impact.

What it is all about

A central question about change is posed and the answers to this are often in the form of stories of who did what, when and why—and the reasons for considering the event important. The stories are collected by finding out what people think has changed over a certain period of time. In addition, respondents are encouraged to report why they consider a particular change to be the most significant. Significant change stories are collected from those directly involved, such as participants, stakeholders and field staff.

MSC key question

The core of the MSC process is a question along the lines of: *'Looking back over the last month, what do you think was the most significant change in [particular domain of change]?'*
A similar question is posed when the answers to the first question are examined by another group of participants: *'From among all these significant changes, what do you think was the most significant change of all?'*

When to use MSC

MSC is suited to monitoring efforts that focus on learning rather than just accountability. It is also an appropriate tool when one is interested in the effect of the intervention on people's lives and one is keen to include the words of non-professionals. MSC is used for some of the following reasons:

- Understand stakeholders' and target groups' perspectives on project activities/outputs, including intended and unintended effects
- Assess relationships and complexities in outcomes that cannot be easily captured in numbers
- Encourage analysis during data collection: people have to explain why they believe one change is more important than another—this ensures immediate feedback loops from the M&E system data collection
- Promote learning mechanisms and affirm key lessons
- Provide communication products to present *what we are achieving to a broad range of stakeholders and partners*

While MSC can be used to address the following, there may be other less time-consuming ways to achieve the same objectives:

- capture expected change
- develop good news stories for public relations
- conduct retrospective evaluation of a programme that is complete
- understand the average experience of participants
- produce an evaluation report for accountability purposes

Some of the key enablers for MSC are:

- an organisational culture where it is acceptable to discuss things that go wrong as well as success
- champions (i.e., people who can promote the use of MSC) with good facilitation skills
- a willingness to try something different
- time to run several cycles of the approach
- infrastructure to enable regular feedback of the results to stakeholders
- commitment by senior managers

The MSC method

▪ **Setting the stage and key parameters**

- ♦ Introduce stakeholders to MSC and foster interest and commitment to participate.
- ♦ Identify the domains of change to be monitored. This involves selected stakeholders identifying broad domains—for example, ‘changes in people’s lives’—that are not precisely defined like performance indicators but are deliberately left loose to be defined by the actual users.
- ♦ Decide how frequently to monitor changes taking place in these domains.

▪ **Collecting stories**

Most MSC stories are usually a page or less in length, with some being up to two pages. It is important to capture sufficient detail. People who tell MSC stories often assume that other people reading their stories will have all the background knowledge. Watch for assumptions about background knowledge and try to make it more explicit. Refer to box on the next page for information to be collected.

▪ **Selecting stories and giving feedback**

Members of a selection panel need to be identified and set up. The selection panel should go through these steps:

- ♦ Everybody reads the stories.

- ♦ The group holds an in-depth conversation about the stories.
- ♦ The group decides which stories are felt to be most significant.
- ♦ The reasons for the group's choice(s) are documented.
- ♦ Feedback is provided to those who collected stories.

▪ **Verification of stories**

- ♦ Aims to improve accuracy of reporting as well as to gather more information on what is seen as especially significant
- ♦ Best done by visiting the sites where the described events took place and asking questions not only of the provider of the story but with those around him or her
- ♦ If conducted sometime after the event, a visit also offers a chance to see what has happened since the “event” was first documented
- ♦ To reduce costs, only selected stories could be verified

▪ **Use of stories**

- ♦ Final products can be used with quantitative data for:
 - Communications
 - Annual Reports
- ♦ To feed review events with government, partners and donors
- ♦ To demonstrate what lessons are being learned
- ♦ To prove the viability of project activities for future replication

Selected stories can be presented in many formats, including videos, pictures, booklets, etc. They can be published in reports and in the web to show partners and stakeholders what we are doing.

This can require involving communications people, following up to fill gaps in the stories and taking video, photos and recording interviews.

Information to be documented

1. Information about who collected the story and when the events occurred
2. Description of the story itself—i.e., what happened. In the description of the change identified as the most significant, one should include factual information on who was involved, what happened, where and when. Where possible, a story should be written as a simple narrative describing the sequence of events that took place.
3. Significance (to the storyteller) of events described in the story. The storyteller is also asked to explain the significance of the story from their point of view.

The collection of MSCs is strongly based on open-ended questions. These enable one

- to find out from people what is important to them and
- to gather information on things that one may not have thought to ask “I have an indicator that we measure...”.

Information from open ended questions are more difficult and time-consuming to analyse and synthesise. MSC can help address some of those limitations.

MSC in the IFAD project completion reporting (PCR) process

Rationale for choosing MSC

There are several reasons the MSC may be of value to IFAD PCR, including the following:

- It is a complementary methodology that strengthens the objective indicator-based M&E system.
- It focuses on learning (rather than just accountability) and may be used to identify key lessons and to guide drafting of recommendations.
- It is a good means of identifying and capturing unexpected changes and can be used to monitor and evaluate bottom-up initiatives.
- It can help in understanding current outcomes and guiding the desired future impact.
- It can deliver a rich picture of what is happening rather than an overly simplified one.
- It is a good way to clearly identify the values that prevail in the project and to have a practical discussion about which of those values are the most important.
- It encourages analysis as well as data collection because people have to explain why they believe one change is more important than another.
- It has value not only for the outputs (stories) it produces but also for the process of collecting the stories itself. The participatory approach to determine factors of significance is also of special importance.
- Its outputs (stories) are a very powerful means for communication since people respond well to stories. This is therefore a good way of sharing knowledge with a specifically identified target audience.

Steps in using MSC

Below are the steps on how MSC was used in two selected projects:

1. Defining the key questions with the implementation team. This will require checking how useful the term 'change' is in the given context and accordingly adjusting the concept and philosophy of the MSC methodology to ensure it has meaning to the people involved.
2. Defining and agreeing on how to document the stories.
3. Preparation of stories of most significant change based on stakeholders' and project team members' experiences.
4. Sharing of stories with a defined group of people, including some 'outsiders' and discussing these in a focus group or fishbowl exercise.
5. Recording further elaborations, explanations and illustration of these stories as discussions proceed.
6. Documenting additional stories that arise during the discussion.

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This approach was used in other IFAD-funded projects (see Scampis project in India, Madagascar and Guatemala).

Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSC	most significant change
PCR	project completion report

Bio-sketch and contact details

Tonya Schuetz has 12 years' experience in change management, personnel development and capacity building: 5 years in the private sector focusing on cost savings, process analysis and optimization, and 7 years in research for development. She has worked in more than 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia with substantial field experience in project and programme coordination across a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, health and education. Her experience includes knowledge and quality management, monitoring and evaluation, project/program design and conceptualisation of adult learning. Tonya is a multi-faceted result-oriented research coordinator and facilitator. She can be reached by email at schuetztonya@gmail.com.

Measuring Change Through Stories



The International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), with support from the Coopernic Sustainability Fund has undertaken a grant-based implementation of Scaling up Micro Irrigation Systems, (SCAMPIS) in three countries. The goal of the programme is to improve agricultural productivity and reduce water use through the use of micro irrigation systems and a fertigation (liquid organic fertilizer) system. In 2012, to complement its quantitative data collection, the International Development Enterprises India (IDEI) SCAMPIS project introduced an innovative monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodology, the Most Significant Change (MSC) tool, in India and Guatemala. It sought to maximise the possibilities for learning from beneficiaries by uncovering the hidden factors or dynamics (not revealed by quantitative M&E tools) that contribute to project success or failure.

What is the Most Significant Change tool?

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory M&E. It is considered participatory because many project stakeholders are involved in the collection and analysis of significant change stories. It is a form of monitoring because it can be used throughout the programme cycle to provide valuable information for improving project implementation. The tool contributes to evaluation because it provides data regarding impact and outcomes, which can be used to assess the performance of the programme as a whole. It contributes to strengthening organisational learning and communication through the analysis process, when staff come together to discuss the changes—i.e., answering the question 'what went wrong?' The information collected and analysed through MSC stories helps improve project impact by supplementing the quantitative M&E analysis; it provides a more complete understanding of what is happening in the field. It also provides a very useful tool to help explain the project goals to farmers (can be used as knowledge management material) or to clarify implementation bottlenecks to staff members.

Why collect stories?

- People tell stories naturally, and storytelling is part of the indigenous culture.
- Stories can capture complexity and context very clearly.
- People remember stories.
- Stories can transmit hard messages and sensitive topics.
- Stories should be carefully analysed for biases: they are subjective and are often colored by the interviewer's and the interviewee's views.

How the MSC technique was introduced and used

Goals of using MSC

- Better understand the M&E qualitative data
- Learn about the farmers' perception of the project or the technologies introduced
- Fill in the gaps between reality in the field and management or donor expectations
- Involve all staff in a coherent process of discussion and reflection on the work conducted

This qualitative tool has four levels of analysis: baseline model, outputs (simple indicator), outcomes (complex indicator) and inputs (or possible impacts inferred). After the first year of analysis, and the interesting qualitative results from the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) survey, the MSC tool was introduced as a method to complement the analysis because of its several key advantages.

- Qualitative data can be collected. SCAMPIS is not just numbers and technologies; it seeks to change the lives of its beneficiaries.
- M&E data could be connected to the perceived real-life impact on different stakeholders in the field.
- The experiences from the three implementation countries could be recorded and compared.
- The project management unit can learn about people at different levels.

First, a training of trainers (ToT) was conducted, led by external facilitators and attended by key project staff and stakeholders from partner organisations and agencies. After completion of the training, village meetings were organised to identify user-farmers and youth who could be trained to conduct the interviews. Their identification and training were critical as local stakeholders were to take the lead in executing MSC activities. The team talked with the user-farmers and explained the MSC tool and its purpose. As a result, many farmers volunteered to share their experiences on various aspects (degree of mobilisation, success in adopting the micro-irrigation technologies and the benefits they got).

Following this strong expression of interest by the farmers, a detailed plan for training of youth interviewers was made. Five training sessions for village youth were conducted by the project staff and others trained during the ToT. The youth were trained on different aspects, including conducting interviews, making videos, taking still photos, developing storyboards, interacting with project beneficiaries, facilitating focus group discussions as well as observing and documenting the process. At the end of the training, each person was asked if he or she had understood the roles and responsibilities, and any doubts were clarified. A total of 24 youth (18 young men and 6 young women) were trained. During the training, the participants discussed the similarities and differences between qualitative M&E and MSC, the principles of MSC and the importance of recording stories carefully. There was an opportunity to practice their story collection and analysis skills. This also helped clarify the roles of the various stakeholders.

Feedback from youth MSC interviewers

Soon after my training, I was worried how I would do the interview, what I will say. But when I actually interacted with the farmers, I was very surprised to hear them talk so much. I was also delighted to hear from the farmers who benefited from the project, when they told us about their increased income and how they felt a sense of social dignity. I learned a lot about M&E; it helped me understand the community and appreciate the impact of the development interventions.

Collection of stories

All of the stories were collected by the 24 local youth (13–16 years old) who had participated in the one-day training. Using a variety of skills (reporting, film making and photography), they conducted interviews with 25 user farmers (23 male and 2 female) across 13 villages in Koraput and Gajapati districts. Everybody liked the idea of involving the local youth because it was felt that they could understand the local environment better and would not miss subtle nuances in meaning (thus reducing the loss of information).

Why young people?

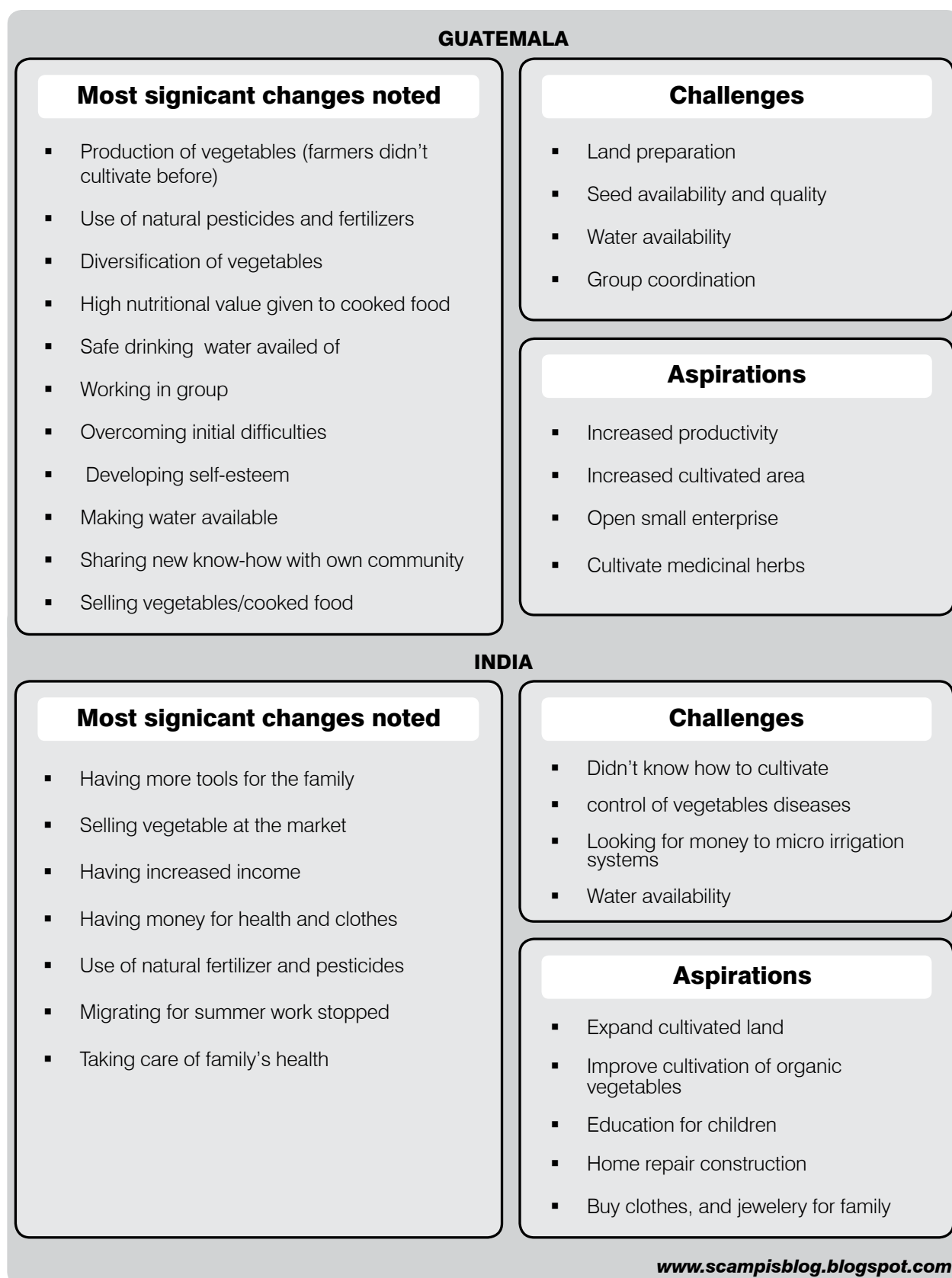
- They are curious and they naturally tend to ask follow-up questions to get a better understanding of the responses.
- They are interested and able to learn the technique quite quickly.
- The interviewees feel more comfortable to share their views with the youth (for example, if a woman smallholder speaks to an older male interviewer, she may not be at ease to share the full extent of her opinions).
- They are more prone to listen carefully and not introduce their own views (thus minimising interviewer bias).
- By participating in the survey, the youth build their self-confidence and their self-image as productive members of the community.

Analysis of cases

The collected stories were discussed and reflected upon in groups. The analysis followed six steps:

- Step 1. After each analysis, an overview of the findings was discussed within the group.
- Step 2. During the first analysis of stories, the staff selected the '10 best' MSC stories.
- Step 3. During the second analysis, six stories were chosen as most representative among the 10.
- Step 4. These selected stories were video-taped, translated and the subtitles added.
- Step 5. After the analysis at the national level, a cross-country analysis was undertaken (Guatemalan national staff analysed the Indian cases and vice versa).
- Step 6. All the stories were collected at the IFAD headquarters level for final evaluation and connection to M&E data.

Figure 1. SCAMPIS Qualitative Analysis



Sample guide questions for interviewers

1. What is your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. How many are in your family? How many sons and daughters do you have?
4. When did you start using the SCAMPIS-introduced technology? Where did you see it for the first time? What did you think of it at the beginning? What technology do you use?
5. Is there any technology used by the women farmers of your family? What type of technology do they use?
6. Are any women farmers involved in the preparation of liquid organic fertilisers?
7. Do you cultivate and take care of the plot alone? Does someone help you? Who?
8. What have you harvested since you started using the technique? How much?
9. Did you cultivate vegetables before having access to the technologies? If the answer is yes, ask: Do you see any difference? If the answer is no, ask: Why?
10. Is this the main source of income for your family? Have you sold some of the vegetables produced with MIS? What did you do with the money from the sale?
11. How was the project before and how is it now? Which are the most significant changes that you have seen? Why are these changes important?

Main findings from applying MSC in Guatemala and India

Levels of analysis

Once all the interviews were completed and the videos recorded, the materials were translated into English. During IDEI's monthly SCAMPIS staff meeting at the India site, the team invited people from other NGOs, the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme, business associates and senior marketing officers of SCAMPIS IDEI who attended the ToT to analyse all stories and select the 10 best stories. This was the first level of analysis.

Keeping the guidelines in mind, the second-level analysis involved senior representatives from the key stakeholders mentioned above. They were invited to further analyse the 10 stories and to further narrow down the selection to six stories. Each participant filled out an MSC analysis sheet, outlining his or her individual preference, which was followed by a discussion and collective decisionmaking to select the six most representative cases.

Strengths of MSC

- **Organisational development and learning:** It improves dialogue, trust and democratic deliberation. It can fill the gaps between perceptions of project management and senior staff and the reality on the ground.
- **Project implementation:** If expected results are not met with MSC, the staff can uncover shortcomings quickly and modify the approach accordingly.
- **M&E:** It improves understanding and contextualises quantitative M&E.
- **Effectiveness:** It directly involves project beneficiaries in improving project effectiveness.
- **Communication:** It improves internal and external communication.
- **Sustainability:** It can be easily implemented and managed by communities and staff.
- **Evaluation:** It can be used for ex-post evaluation.

Lessons learned

The overall experience of participating in MSC training and using the tool was very encouraging for all involved. The youth had never before been directly involved in a similar monitoring exercise, so there was some scepticism; however, during the meetings with the local youth and farmers, strong enthusiasm was noted. During the training the youth were motivated and keen to learn, and they undertook their tasks in a professional manner. MSC is a useful technique that helped capture the qualitative aspects of project impact. It not only helped the project to go beyond numbers; it helped achieve better analysis/cross-analysis. It provided deeper insights into the 'real' impact of work.

MSC is suitable for M&E that focuses on learning rather than just accountability. It is an appropriate tool for including the views of non-professional contributors in the assessment of the intervention. MSC also helps staff improve their capacity to capture and analyse the impact of their work.

Limitations of MSC

MSC also had some limitations. It seems to be best suited as a complementary tool to the use of quantitative assessment tools. As a standalone M&E exercise it can provide only illustrative information, not grounded in a clear context of actions and impacts. The inclusion of a larger number of cases could have helped do better cross-analysis at the local level. Trained staff have since left the project, and it is important to ensure access to this capacity to understand MSC studies.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

IDEI	International Development Enterprises (India)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSC	most significant change
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SCAMPIS	Scaling up Micro Irrigation Systems
ToT	training of trainers

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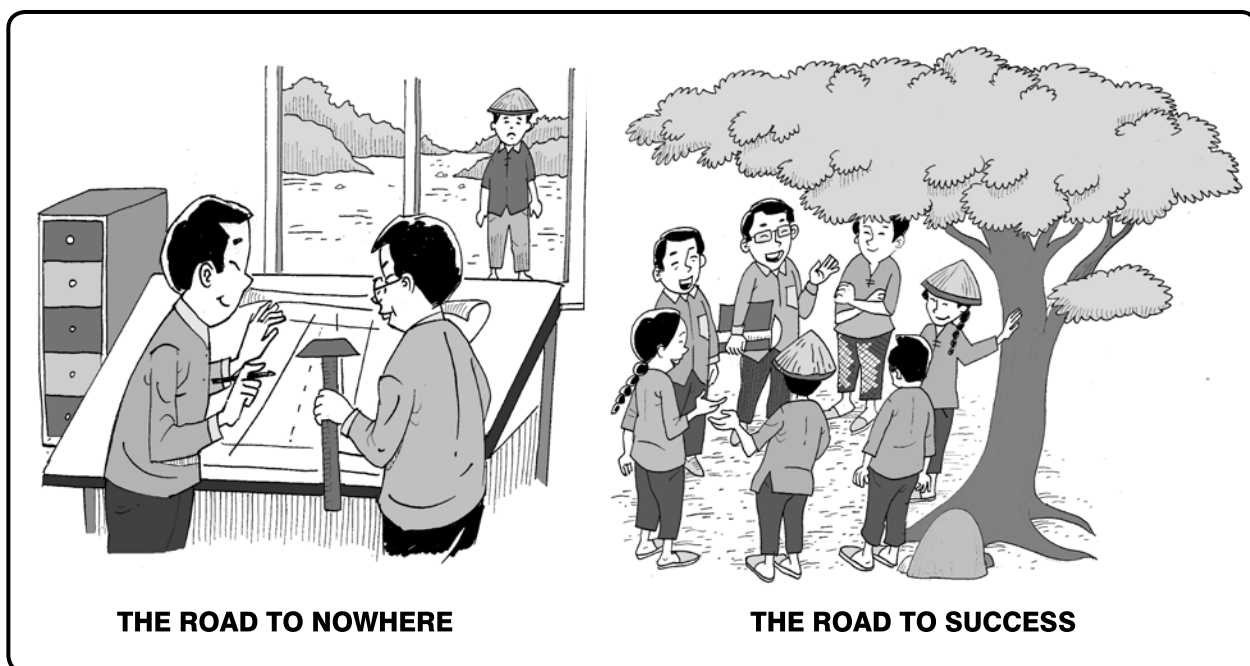
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Born in a farming family, he was the first person in the family to complete post graduation. IDEI in Odisha provided a good platform for further professional development. As the first paid field staff of IDEI, he benefited from working extensively with scores of marginalised and smallholder farmers, across different states in India. The focus was on providing access to potable water, reducing menial physical labour and promoting sustainable farming practices. He draws strength from the hardworking smallholders of rural India, particularly those living in the most backward areas of rural Odisha.

Piloting Most Significant Change Stories at the Project Completion Report Phase



The final evaluation of a multiyear project provides the opportunity to comprehensively assess the impact of project activities and to extract experiences and lessons that can be disseminated to key stakeholders. Complex multi-intervention projects often rely on detailed quantitative tools to gather data and to present results. Nevertheless, at the project completion report (PCR) preparation phase, it is sometimes necessary to broaden the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) toolkit to get a firm grasp of the results behind the figures. Numbers are very good at indicating outputs (what structures were built, how much it cost, how many people participated in the training, etc.) but, for a more profound understanding of the scope



and value of the outcomes, other tools are more effective. For instance, in addition to measuring how many kilometers of road are built, the project needs to talk to the people to assess how their lives have changed since it was built. Using the most significant change (MSC) stories tool is like starting with something very small—a short individual story—but ending up with something very big—the most important impacts of the project on the target beneficiaries, as experienced by them.

Two IFAD-financed projects in China piloted the use of MSC in their PCRs, the Si'Chuan Post-Earthquake Agriculture Rehabilitation Project (SPEAR) and the South Gansu Poverty Reduction Programme (SGPRP). They explored the application of this qualitative tool alongside their regular M&E activities, which included the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS), baseline surveys, and the annual project reviews.

Most significant change

The MSC technique is a form of participatory M&E, originally developed by Rick Davies (for more information, see <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs>). It is a storytelling tool similar to unstructured interviews, but more informal—like brief conversations. The interviewer tries to find impact indicators by seeking answers to the following questions:

- What was the situation x years ago? What is it like now? What has changed in your life?
- Is the change positive or negative?
- How is the project connected with this change?

Project staff collect the significant change stories at the field level, followed by a systematic analysis of the most interesting or important stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. Once the important changes have been captured, various groups of stakeholders read the stories, followed by a joint discussion, about the value of the reported changes and the criteria why they consider them significant.

The application of MSC is very flexible and can be applied at different levels:

- It can be used for periodic monitoring throughout the project cycle as it is a quick and easy tool to apply, and its feedback can be easily integrated at any point in the implementation.
- Used more comprehensively, it can be used for evaluation because it provides conclusions on outcomes and impact and gives a snapshot of the impact of the programme as a whole.
- It can be used for documentation and communication purposes as it provides a series of outputs (stories) that might be of interest for a specific target audience.

It is a very versatile tool that can be administered by interviewers with different skills: project staff, external stakeholders, and even non-standard collection persons (e.g., teenagers talking to their grandparents in the community to check the impact of a newly established care center). Using non-professional interviewers can provide interesting advantages by minimising interviewer bias. Once the stories are compiled, they are weighed to select the most striking stories. The criteria for selecting the stories can vary: for example, stories that are repeating the same theme (looking for trends), stories that are particularly powerful (looking for strong impact) and stories that indicate some surprising unexpected impacts or outline unexpected opportunities (unintended outcomes), etc.

Table 1. Key steps in the MSC approach.

FOUR KEY STEPS OF MSC	
Step 1 Preparation and conceptualisation	After an initial review of various tools, MSC was selected as the most appropriate complementary qualitative tool due to its participatory/ interactive features and its ability to bring out subtle expected and unexpected effects. A concept note was developed on using MSC in the PCR phase.
Step 2 Contextualisation	The concept note was discussed with the IFAD China office and with local project offices in order to adjust it to local needs. The length of the training was tailored to the work schedules of the stakeholders and their perceived needs.

FOUR KEY STEPS OF MSC	
Step 3 Training	Each project had a single training session (lasting 2½ days), with around 30 knowledge management and M&E staff from the provincial and county project management offices. Listening, recording and peer review skills were practiced during the training to improve interviewing competencies. A field visit was organised to help participants gain hands-on experience in applying MSC.
Step 4 Next steps/ Replication	The training sessions highlighted the need to mainstream qualitative M&E and knowledge management tools in project M&E in China. The roadmap for mainstreaming was developed–i.e., who needs to do what. A proposal was then drafted to organise these trainings, including writeshops to improve the capacity of project staff to document results. An entry point for this training could be the start of planning for the PCR, when project results need to be assessed.

The trainings created an interactive forum, where all participants were free to join and discuss as equals. At the beginning of the training, the facilitators emphasised transparency and equality as the basic values in the training. A group discussion approach was adopted throughout the training. Instead of sitting in rows, which is often done in top-down trainings, participants were invited to arrange their tables in a large circle and/or in small clusters, to best facilitate mobility and interaction.

Value of training

- Improves interviewing skills of the participants; they learn ways of following up to gather more information and verifying the validity of information.
- Presents complementary qualitative M&E methodology, including MSCs and built-in tools/methods.
- Maximises 'learning by doing'. The methodology is first practised several times among the trainers themselves to sharpen their skills and improve subsequent story collection from project beneficiaries.

At the start of the training, expectation management was used to gather the expectations of participants. These were presented and discussed with them openly on how they fit with the objectives of the workshop. Subsequently, the facilitators introduced the adjusted to steps of MSC (Box 1). Due to the limited time available, only the first five steps were practised. The subsequent steps were presented in the follow-up sessions.

Special emphasis was placed on describing, in great detail, the interviewing/listening skills needed for gathering valid and detailed information from the people in the field. The participants were provided with questionnaires to use as guide for their interviews with beneficiary households. To preserve the participatory value of their input, ample space was given to participants at each session, through either a plenary discussion or a group discussion, to reflect on each training tool. It helped introduce a feedback mechanism on the relevance and effectiveness of what they were learning. Practicing these skills is necessary for getting the techniques right. The participants had a chance to collect MSC stories in a safe, guided environment by interviewing each other. Then, on the second day, field work was organised, where the participants had a chance to test what they have learned by interviewing beneficiary households and collecting real-life stories. While they were conducting the informal interviews, the story collectors could rely on the lists of questions as indicative guidelines (see examples in Table 2). They are free to also add or drop questions from the list to better respond to the individual interview context and the beneficiary's situation. On the final day of the training, the participants were invited back to the meeting room. The next stage of the MSC process was practised: the joint discussion and evaluation of the stories to assess their contribution to the analysis of project results.

Box 1: Ten Adjusted Steps of MSC

1. Define reporting period (*SPEAR*, 3 yr; *SGPRP*, 6 yr)
2. Collect significant change stories
3. Define domain of change (cluster) (*Optional*)
4. Select significant change stories (*including defining selection criteria*)
5. Get feedback on choices made
6. Verify
7. Quantify
8. Conduct meta-monitoring + secondary analysis
9. Re-package stories for identified target audience
10. Reset the MSC system

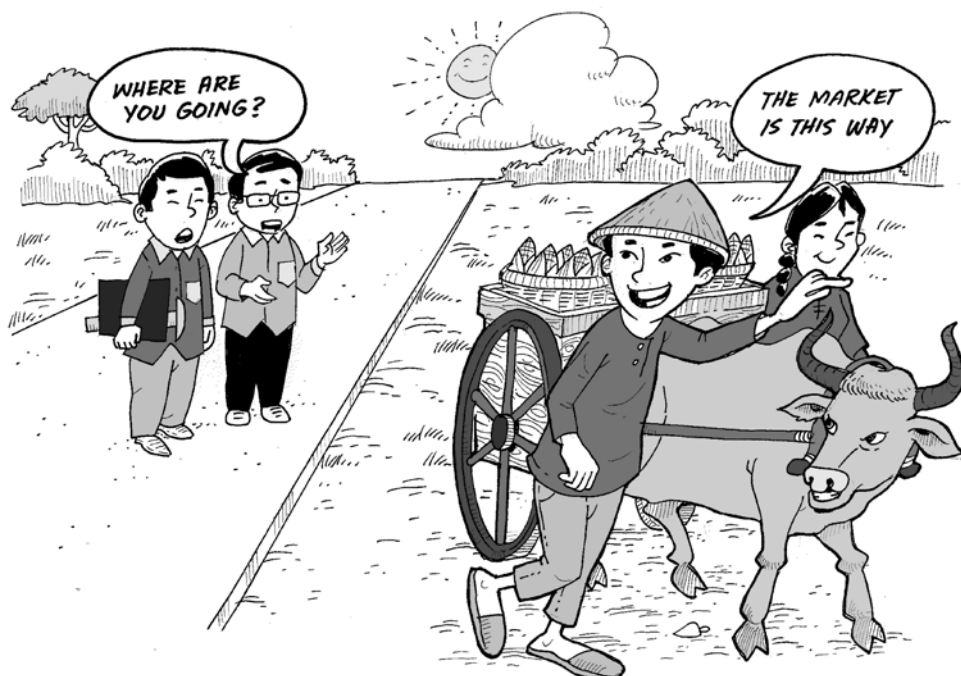


Table 2. Commonly asked questions during MSC interviews.

Opening questions	Follow-up questions
Are you aware of IFAD projects?	Are you personally involved in an IFAD project?
Have you experienced any changes brought by the project?	How was the situation in the village before and how is it now after the changes?
Who benefited from the changes?	Who hasn't?
Is the change significant for you?	Is it expected or unexpected?
What would be a significant change for you?	If yes, please specify....
What are the conducive factors?	What are the constraining factors?
What other suggestions do you have?	

Box 2. A diversity of qualitative M&E and knowledge-sharing methods.

There are various qualitative M&E and knowledge-sharing methods that can be applied during the MSC, including the after action review (AAR), gallery walk, elevator pitch and spider web. The application of these methods was introduced throughout the training, giving the participants the opportunity to become familiar with these tools.

- The AAR is a structured review or debriefing process for analysing what happened, why it happened, and how it can be done better. It has been built as a knowledge management tool to foster a culture of accountability.
- The gallery walk allows participants to first draft their stories on a flipchart. They present their stories to others within a predefined time period (e.g., 5 min). The audience comments on the presentation and suggest potential areas for improvement.
- The elevator pitch is used to sharpen logic and formulate concise presentations done in a limited time frame. The participants are given 5 minutes in this training to present their projects to senior officials.
- The spider web is a participatory evaluation tool that provides participants with the chance to evaluate an event in its various dimensions. In the MSC training, several dimensions were included: relevance, effectiveness, facilitation/coordination skills and logistical arrangement, among others.

Lessons learned

- The MSC tool is very valuable for putting numbers in context. For instance, by summarising the most significant stories, SPEAR staff were inspired to think beyond quantity. Initially, they were very focused and satisfied with simply the numbers (e.g., biogas cells built in a short time).
- Stories, however, helped uncover other impacts. The households were thankful for receiving help during their most difficult times. The unintended outcome of this assistance was that the beneficiaries felt empowered and motivated to undertake other initiatives.
- Mainstreaming knowledge management and qualitative M&E can enhance project impacts. It is important to define a roadmap that outlines how mainstreaming will be accomplished and how to engage key stakeholders, especially in the clarification of their respective responsibilities.
- Additional resources, capacity and skills—particularly at the project level—are needed for the broader application (mainstreaming) of this tool in project monitoring. Consultants can help in the process, acting as 'triggers' for introducing the concept and exposing trainers to their first experience with this tool. However, for MSC to become an integral part of a project toolbox, the country office needs to take a leading role in developing in-house capacity of all project team members.

Value added and next steps

SPEAR

- The visit of the IFAD assessment mission triggered a set of changes in the project's approach to doing their PCR. They started to look beyond filling out numbers in the report template. The facilitators provided a participatory forum and a platform where key messages from the beneficiaries were summarised and used alongside the quantitative figures. The stories/case studies enriched the content of PCR and helped project stakeholders to analyse their experiences and to draw lessons for possible application to other projects.
- The idea and methodology of collecting stories were new to the team. The hands-on experience, (despite the short time span) helped improve the understanding and appreciation of the value of qualitative data/information and its importance as an integral part of project M&E impacts. (Refer to Box 2 for the range of qualitative M&E and knowledge-sharing tools.)
- In addition to recognising the value of presenting results in numeric terms (e.g., the number of biogas cells built), SPEAR staff could now also see the story behind the biogas cells. SPEAR is ready to share the knowledge and experiences with other stakeholders.

SGPRP

- The added value of the qualitative approach was an opportunity to provide the provincial Project Management Office with story-based evidence of what they had been doing in their project for some years—gathering impact information through unstructured interviews. The training on MSC provided them with the tools to further systematise their story collection, adding the component of participatory selection and dissemination processes.

- Following the training, they felt that it was possible to integrate the MSC approach throughout the project implementation period and to use this methodology as a periodical and complementary qualitative monitoring tool.
- The participatory methods used in the training, interviewing skills and the experiences of collecting stories directly from the field were relevant to future project activities.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAR	after action review
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSC	most significant change stories
PCR	project completion report
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SGPRP	South Gansu Poverty Reduction Program
SPEAR	Si'Chuan Post-Earthquake Agriculture Rehabilitation Project

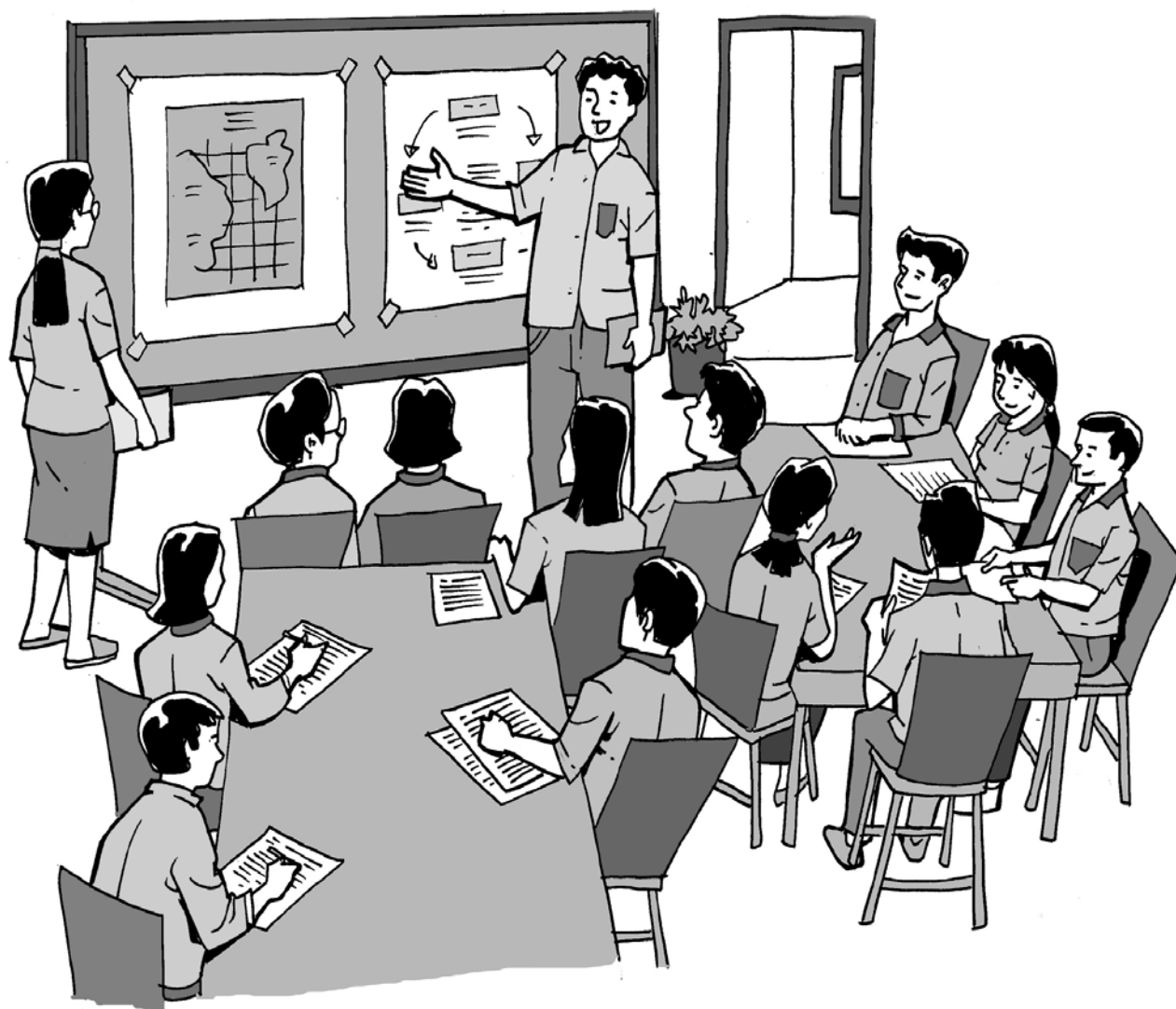
Bio-sketch and contact details

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Tools for Specific Measurement Needs

Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool



Rural poverty has many causes and dimensions and these are often specific to a country and a particular context. Because poverty is multifaceted and highly complex, it is challenging to assess and measure aspects of poverty in a useful way. Yet, the root causes of poverty need to be understood in order to design and apply relevant, beneficial interventions with the goal of reducing poverty in a given region and enabling residents to pursue meaningful and rewarding lives and livelihoods. Generally speaking, fostering an enabling environment that allows people to create the type of life

All of the resources needed to implement the Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool are available free of charge on the MPAT website: www.ifad.org/mpat

they choose is, arguably, the overarching goal of many rural poverty reduction initiatives. This requires a combination of essential social services, access to information and productive assets, skills training, social and physical infrastructure, etc. Yet, regardless of the type of intervention, it is crucial to first ensure that people's fundamental needs are adequately addressed, and that they are not hampered by other core constraints to their lives and livelihoods. That is, it is arguably crucial to first acquire an understanding of the status of core poverty-related sectors (e.g., water and sanitation, food security) before moving forward with project design.

The multidimensional poverty assessment tool (MPAT)

In 2008, the Multidimensional Poverty Assessment (MPA) Project, a collaborative, international initiative led by IFAD, was begun to develop, test and pilot a new tool for local-level rural poverty assessment.

The aim was to design a simple, efficient yet robust tool that could provide an overview of fundamental and relatively universal dimensions that are integral to rural livelihoods and rural life, and thus to rural poverty. MPAT measures people's capacity *to do* by focusing on key aspects and indicators of the domains essential to an enabling environment within which people are sufficiently free from their immediate needs and are therefore likely in a position to more successfully pursue their higher needs and, ultimately, their wants.

MPAT's 10 components measure fundamental dimensions of rural life, livelihoods, and human well-being (see Figure 1).

After several years of development, intensive field testing in real project and poverty situations in China and India and technical input by national and international experts, A working paper on multidimensional poverty assessment tool (MPAT) was released in early 2010.

MPAT is a survey-based thematic indicator primarily designed to assist project design, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), targeting and prioritisation efforts at a local level. Household and village-level surveys are used to collect data, which are then assigned values on the same scale so that they can then be organised by way of indicators.

MPAT provides an overview of 10 fundamental dimensions related to human well-being and rural livelihoods (see Figure 1). The first six dimensions—food and nutrition security; domestic water supply; health and healthcare; sanitation and hygiene; housing, clothing and energy, and education—are largely based on the *Basic Needs* theory and can be considered *fundamental needs*. These six dimensions were drawn from decades of experience and research around the work that link these components, and their synergistic interconnections, to rural poverty alleviation and human well-being. The last four dimensions address fundamental aspects of rural livelihoods, life and well-being—farm assets; non-farm assets; exposure and resilience to shocks, and gender and social equality. They were developed through the exchange of ideas among practitioners, academics, and other experts involved in the MPA project. These four dimensions reflect the way in which rural life, livelihoods and poverty have changed in recent years—a “new rurality” as some have termed it—that is largely the result of an increasingly complex world within which poor rural people tend to be on the losing end of new institutional, climatic and socio-political realities.

The MPAT structure

There are many challenges inherent in the use of surveys and indicators when attempting to measure poverty, and these challenges were addressed from the beginning of the MPA Project. Indeed, great efforts were made to ensure that the MPAT surveys were developed as professionally as possible and that the indicators were arrived at through a participatory process involving a wide range of stakeholders. Both the MPAT household and village surveys have been analysed and tested to reduce bias by carefully choosing the wording and ordering of the questions and by developing a thorough enumerator training programme. So too, the indicators were subjected to rigorous, independent statistical analysis, as well as an in-field validation exercise.

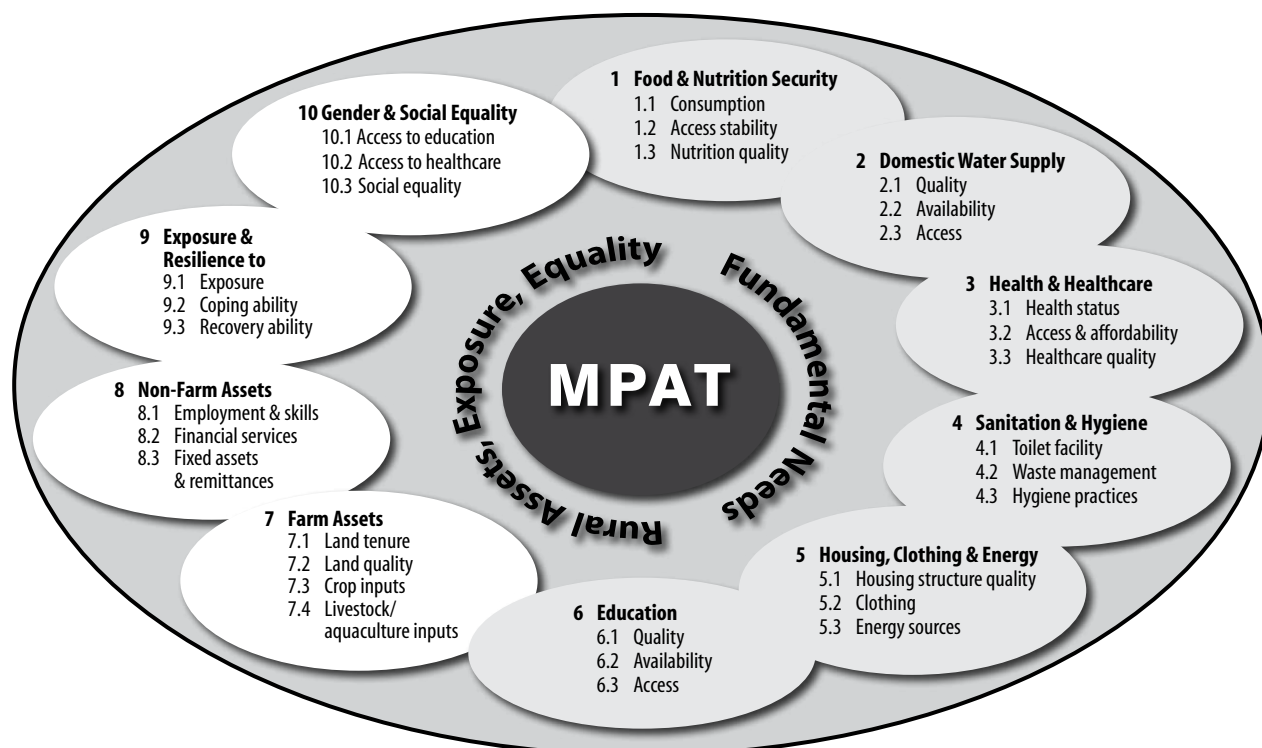


Figure 1. Organisational diagram of MPAT components and subcomponents.

MPAT's data are organised and presented via a thematic indicator. Indicators are, justifiably, controversial tools and poverty indicators are especially imperfect instruments. Nonetheless, they can prove useful if properly and transparently designed, developed and applied.

When it comes to detailed, context-specific poverty assessment, participatory approaches are arguably the best option for attaining a thorough understanding of poverty characteristics in an area. To be sure, this is the preferable methodology in many situations; but if the goal is to obtain a thorough overview of key sectors and make spatial and temporal comparisons, then there is a need for standardisation, which is especially difficult to achieve when using relatively open-ended participatory approaches.

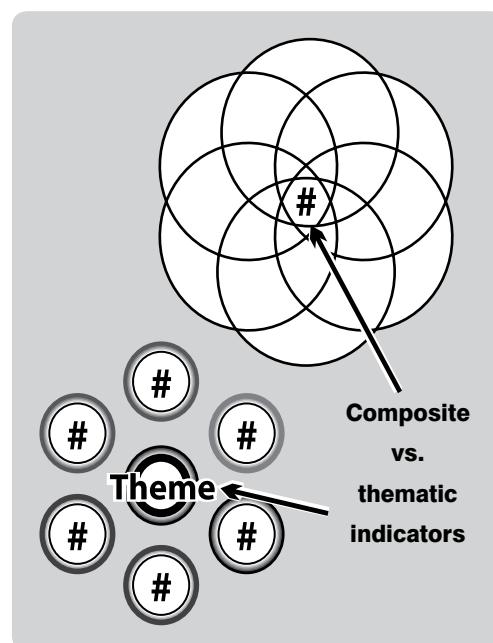
MPAT can be used to make comparisons across space and time.

Standardisation means that the same tool is used the same way each time; this in turn means that if MPAT is used in the same project multiple times, then the indicators/

results can be compared. The same holds true if MPAT is used in different countries—this is part of MPAT's value: the ability to make comparisons across space and time. Indeed, a reliable, standardised assessment tool can support project M&E, by being implemented at project start-up (for a baseline assessment) or beforehand to support design, for a mid-term review and finally for a project completion assessment.

Surveys provide a means of collecting data in a standardized fashion, and indicators allow for the systematic and transparent valuation and summation of qualitative and quantitative data. Central to ensuring reliable, quality data capture is the standardisation of the surveys, as well as the way in which they are administered.

Once the data are collected, survey responses are assigned values that are in turn aggregated into subcomponents and components. Many poverty-related indices are composite indicators. A composite indicator is an amalgamation of different indicator values into a single value, or index, which seeks to represent those individual indicators. For example, a stock index is a well-known type of indicator. Clearly, it is useful, since it provides a gauge as to how the market, overall, is performing at a given point in time. However, it is not necessarily useful for making specific investment decisions. When combining or averaging large sets of data, outliers are often lost in the process, and gradations of clarity become blurred. A thematic indicator, on the other hand, is a grouping of indicators that measures values similar to a common theme or concept. A thematic indicator is useful when one wants to understand a general construct but does not want the values from each element to be blended together into one value.



How it works: the MPAT survey and indicator architecture

Specifically, the MPAT surveys collect data from two sources: households and village-level leaders, educators and healthcare staff. Thus, there are two MPAT surveys, the MPAT *Household Survey* and the MPAT *Village Survey*. The vast majority of the data collected come from the household survey. This is appropriate because one of the key goals of MPAT is to provide a forum that allows rural people to communicate their perceptions and their beliefs about the key domains that surround and impact their lives. That is, part of MPAT's value is that the data come from the beneficiaries themselves, although the data are organised by household. The

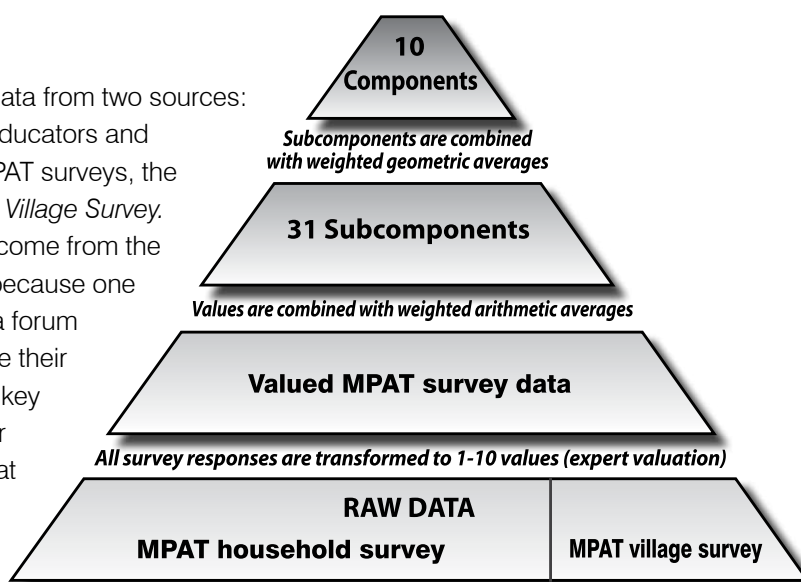


Figure 2. How MPAT's data are converted into component scores.

household survey is administered more like an interview than a questionnaire, which allows enumerators to engage respondents in a meaningful way but also quickly record respondents' answers (by selecting pre-coded answers on the household survey); This saves time and is one of the reasons MPAT can be administered in 35 minutes per household, on average. The village surveys are structured the same way and are used to capture information on village-level changes and conditions.

Once the data for a given region are captured through the MPAT surveys, the data are checked through a rigorous quality control process [termed Check-Score-Code(CSC)]. Once the data pass quality control and are entered into the Excel Spreadsheet, there are three steps used to convert the data into component scores (see Figure 2). First, survey question responses are assigned values on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the high, or more desirable, score. That is, for each survey question, each possible response is assigned a value from 1 to 10. Next, the values from the survey responses are aggregated to yield subcomponent scores. Different expert-weightings are used for this aggregation process (all of the values and weights are available in the MPAT User's Guide and Excel spreadsheet). Finally, these subcomponents are themselves combined to create component values since each is a composite indicator. As data move up this information pyramid, resolution is increasingly lost, but the complexity of the situation the data represent is simplified in step.

The weighting scheme helps ensure that the subcomponents are aggregated to yield component scores in such a way that the impact of the subcomponents, which are seen to have higher priority, is maximised. If one project is to be compared to another, then both must use the standardised MPAT survey item valuations and weighting aggregation formulas.

That said, clearly every context is different, and as such, priorities are not uniform across regions (e.g., an arid region as compared with a water-rich one). Therefore, before collecting the MPAT data, users are encouraged to think about and experiment with the subcomponent weightings in order to tailor them to best reflect the priorities in their region—that is, they can create a *context-specific MPAT*, alongside the standardised version. In addition, users can change the values assigned to the survey items to better fit the context in a given area. While every effort was made to use valuations that should, for the most part, be universally applicable, this will not always be the case. Thus, the user should first calculate the standardised MPAT (to compare with other projects and with their own project at other times) and then may change the valuations and/or weightings as appropriate, in order to calculate a context-specific MPAT, ideally providing documentation justifying these changes. (The reason this should be done before collecting the data is so that there is less of a risk of possibly manipulating the weights or values to provide better results.)

Users have the option to further enhance the MPAT survey with additional questions if they wish to capture data specific to their region or project, which are not already addressed in the standardised MPAT surveys. However, questions can only be added to the end of the MPAT survey (for both the household survey and the village survey) since the addition of questions anywhere else in the MPAT surveys will likely disrupt the tool's psychometric soundness, and the tool and its output will no longer be comparable with MPAT surveys used elsewhere. It perhaps goes without saying that if a context-specific MPAT is calculated, it cannot be compared with the standardised MPAT indicators calculated in other project/regions.

Potential uses of MPAT

MPAT was designed to be used in different contexts and countries of the developing world. A simple tool like MPAT allows project managers, government officials and others to regularly monitor and determine those

sectors that require support for reducing rural poverty and improving livelihoods. It also provides an objective means of justifying resource allocation or planning priorities. One way to present data is to summarise them in one graph as seen in Figure 3. The closer to the outside edge of the graph, the better the score. It is evident with even a quick glance that some fundamental needs like sanitation and hygiene, housing clothing and energy are severely unmet. Non-farm assets and exposure to shocks also call for close attention.

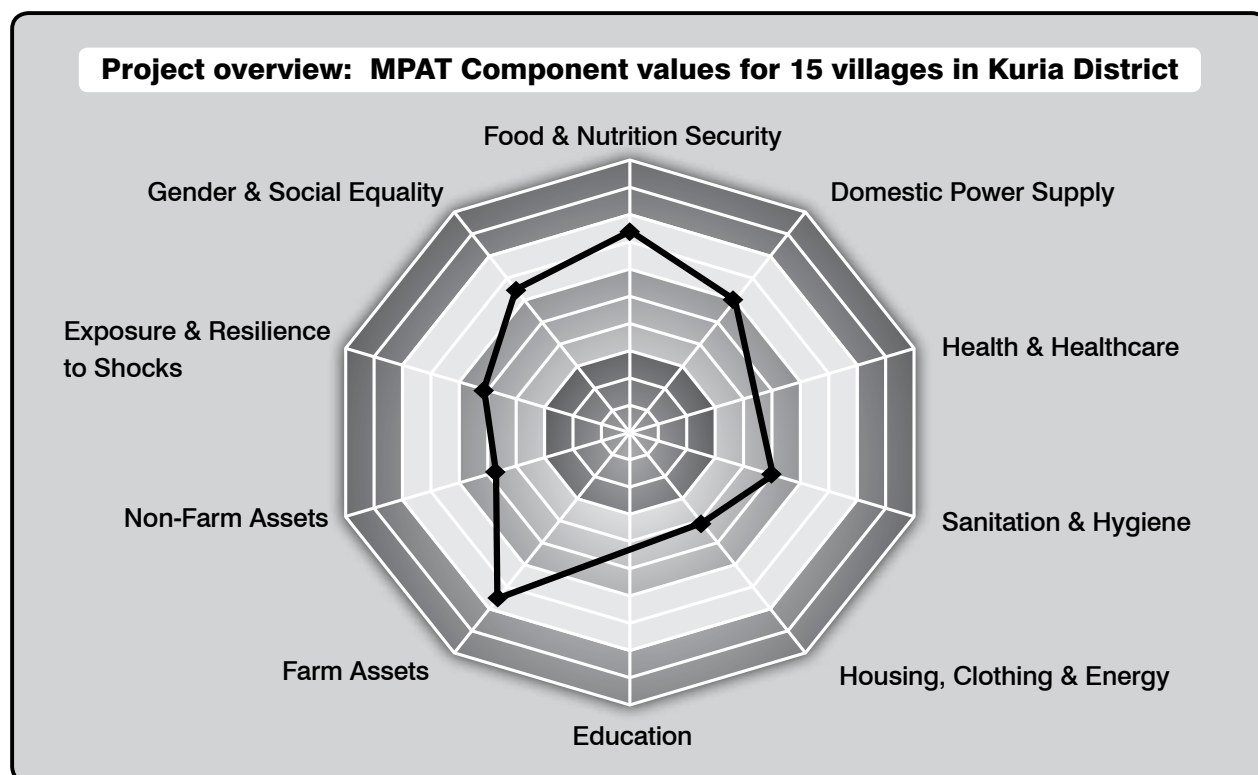


Figure 3. 2011 data from rural Kenya—480 households across 15 villages.

Raising awareness

The use of MPAT at the design stage of a project can help shed light on whether the conditions are right for a specific development intervention—especially those that are more advanced or sophisticated.

Beneficiary empowerment and advocacy

MPAT provides a tool for starting dialogue with would-be beneficiaries to understand their perceptions and concerns *before* project design. For example, by asking beneficiaries to rank MPAT's components and subcomponents from their point, one can quickly see the concerns and priorities of different groups. Once MPAT is implemented, these concerns can then be “married” with the data from design and planning surveys when negotiating project specifics with government agencies. This could also be done in the reverse order: first calculate the MPAT indicators for a given region and then share the results with focus groups of beneficiaries to elicit their responses. Afterwards, one could see how well they identify with the findings, and then share the combined data with government agencies to refine project design.

Policy dialogue and national programme support

At a national level, MPAT provides a means of stimulating discussion around country-level poverty-reduction strategies. It also provides a framework for dialogue with government ministries concerning their priorities at the country level. For IFAD (and other donors), this provides a way to discuss how such goals/objectives might be better incorporated into *country strategic opportunities programmes* (COSOPs). MPAT also serves as a mechanism to help government agencies cooperate on shared poverty-reduction goals. MPAT is also of relevance to local governments as it can help depict key issues in their constituency and critical action areas.

Targeting and prioritisation

MPAT provides a means of quickly identifying key problem sectors in a region, with a resolution as precise as the household level if needed. This is especially useful in areas where the general poverty level is known to be low, but there is not enough information to determine how to use finite resources to benefit those areas and sectors most in need. Thus, MPAT is a highly useful resource for the first steps of a targeting or prioritisation effort.

Design

MPAT could aid project planners significantly at the design phase by identifying problem areas (which may or may not have been central to the would-be project's primary purpose); this allows planners to have a “big picture” overview at the beginning to make sure target groups will be properly addressed by the project.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation support was one of the primary uses envisioned for MPAT. It can be used at the design and/or baseline stage of a project, then again for the mid-term assessment and finally for the project

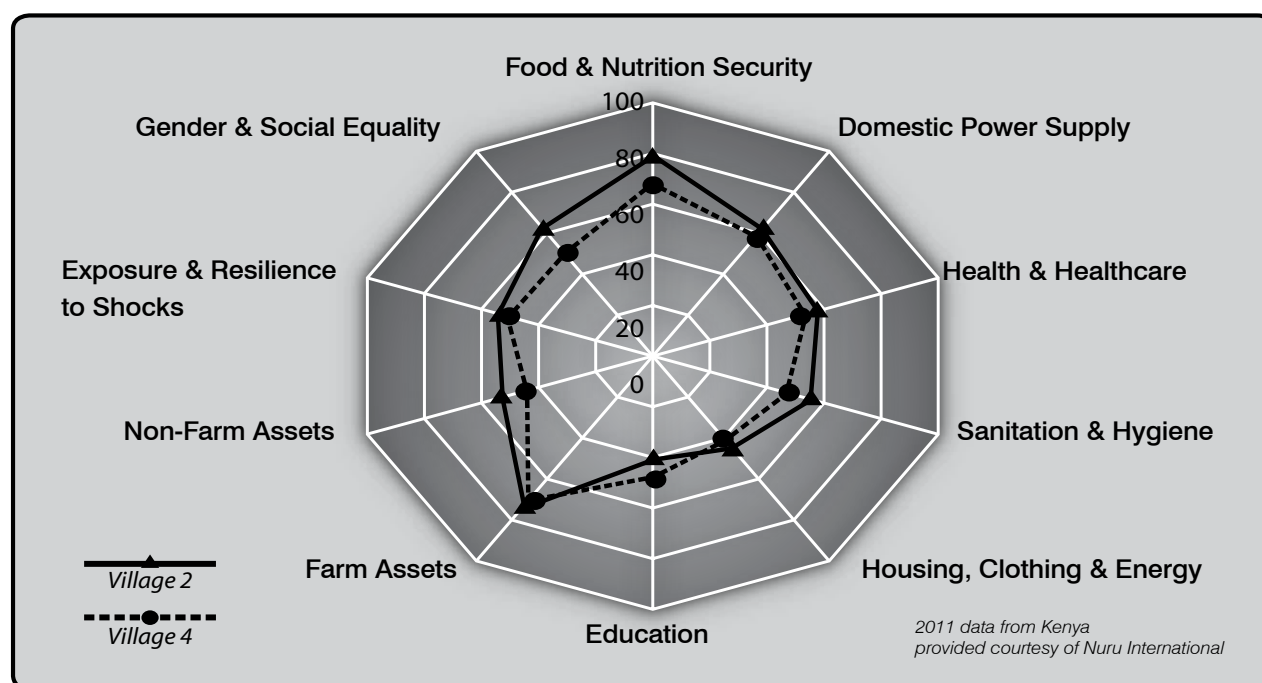


Figure 4. Comparison overlay of MPAT indicators for two villages in rural Kenya.

completion assessment (usually this involves intervals of 3 or 4 years). In this way, MPAT can provide detailed information on how sectors are changing (for better or for worse) at different scales (from the household to the project level) in an area. Ideally, MPAT would be used again years after the project is completed in order to help determine the longer term impact of the project. Once calculated at two points in time, MPAT values for a given scale can be overlaid to visually assess changes by sector. This can also be done to compare two locations within a project (see Figure 4) or even two projects, or two villages or two households, at the same time or at different times. However, MPAT is not by itself sufficient for a thorough project M&E; rather it is envisioned as a primary support tool, which can lend perspective and provide guidance to support evaluations efforts.

In-country and cross-country comparisons

MPAT provides a standardised means of comparing areas and projects, which in turn can help stimulate improvement at a regional, country or even cross-country level. Used in this way, MPAT can help stimulate efforts to increase component scores via on-the-ground action in response to comparisons with other projects/ areas.

Additional data analysis with a large, comprehensive dataset

While the main use of data captured via the MPAT surveys is to create the MPAT indicators, the great wealth of data collected can be used for other forms of analysis. Since MPAT data are collected and calculated at the household level, one could run many types of correlation analysis, for example, by first disaggregating households based on female and male-headed households. Clearly then, the wealth of data collected via the MPAT surveys provides numerous and essentially limitless possibilities with respect to additional data analysis that can be used to provide key information for project reports of all kinds. Having followed the MPAT survey methodology and the CSC method, the user can be confident that the data are of high quality—to the point that sophisticated statistical analysis can be confidently performed at the household level. This is indeed *added value*.

Important considerations when using MPAT

Once MPAT is calculated for an area, if one wishes to better understand the results, that is, the values of the components and subcomponents, it is crucial to look at the data behind the numbers. Furthermore, and this perhaps goes without saying, it is necessary to adequately take the local context into consideration when evaluating MPAT's results and indeed to get at the “whys” behind the MPAT results. Participatory approaches should be employed.

In addition, it should be remembered that since the household is the primary unit of analysis, MPAT misses the transient poor (i.e., those without fixed residences). The importance of this caveat will vary by region. Finally, it ought to be kept in mind that MPAT is an imperfect tool. Indeed, any such poverty indicator is—necessarily—imperfect. Understanding MPAT's limitations provides a means of ensuring its optimal use. Thus, the valuations for the survey item responses will be relevant most of the time in most areas, but they will not always be appropriate or accurate. Outliers can make valuations inaccurate. It is not expected that such situations will arise with great frequency, but it is important that the user be aware of this potential avenue for MPAT to provide an inaccurate proxy measure of a given subcomponent in a given region.

MPAT Value Added	How it helps
Gives a voice to local communities and helps project leaders make more informed decisions	Accurate information, directly from the people you are working for and with, leads to better decisionmaking and better project results over time.
Standardisation across countries, time and project types	This allows you to learn from colleagues in other regions or countries and to showcase your successes so that others can learn from you, when appropriate.
Developed by a group of rural development experts	The MPAT developers are much like you and have experience in the same types of villages that you work in everyday. They have done their best to develop a tool that will help you in your work, and they are completely transparent as to how they developed the tool—this allows you to check their assumptions.
A field-tested data collection tool	It is almost always better to use tested data collection methodologies to avoid biases, leading questions, inaccurate data, etc. “Newly designed data collection strategies, proposed specifically for the intervention, add an additional burden and risk for the project or evaluation team and should be relied on only as a last resort” (Independent Evaluation Group, 2012:32).
Much of the work already done for you	This User’s Guide provides a robust data collection tool tested by IFAD staff, specific instructions on sampling in rural areas, a training guide for enumerators, a data entry method to ensure accuracy, the data analysis spreadsheet that “does the math” for you and a visual way to display the data so that staff and community members alike can understand the results. Your job is to understand and implement it well, but you don’t have to start from scratch.
Designed for organisations of all sizes and budgets	This is high-quality data collection, designed for rural areas and local staff. It will take some hard work, but it does not have to “break the bank” of the organisation or require outside expertise.

MPAT Value Added	How it helps
Includes safeguards to minimise poor data quality	Collecting accurate data is extremely important but not always easy. The MPAT has built-in methods that will help you do this well (such as the CSC data entry method).
Standardized, but can be customised	MPAT offers a way to standardise the results so you can compare your work with other areas and learn from each other. It also allows you to customise the computations specific to your community situation, if you feel that there is something particular to your community context that needs to be taken into account. If you do this, you want to do both standardised and customised in order to compare the two.
Uses locally collected data	You will get data directly from your local area that are sampled and collected in such a way that they will tell an accurate story of the specific region within which you work. You will not have to compare information about your (possibly) small project area to national-level databases.
Can look at data in both big and small ways	By household, by village, by project. Over time, villages within the same project to one another. Projects on different continents compared with one another. Endless possibilities.
Includes automatic visual communication aids (radar graphs and color coding) of MPAT data	The MPAT spreadsheet automatically creates an MPAT profile that shows data visually by component. It also includes a color-coding scheme that offers a quick glance option for seeing the high and low scores in each area.

MPAT resources

All of the resources needed to implement MPAT are available for interested users free of charge on the MPAT website: www.ifad.org/mpat. These resources include

- **The MPAT user's guide** provides step-by-step instructions for using MPAT, with a focus on training enumerators and supervisors and on data entry, as well as advice on customising MPAT. The user's guide is targeted toward practitioners and project management staff. The 2009 version of this publication was released as a "working document" and is in the process of being revised. It is anticipated that a finalised version will be available in late 2013 or early 2014.
- **The MPAT Excel spreadsheet** is designed so that users can simply enter in the survey data and it will automatically calculate the MPAT subcomponent and component scores/results. All of the data on valuations and weightings are provided here, as well as in the user's guide. The Excel sheet provides the MPAT results for each individual household, as well as summaries for each village, and for the entire project.
- **The MPAT book (2009)** outlines the methodological foundation for the MPAT, giving the reader a clear understanding of the *why*, *how* and *for what purpose* MPAT was created; it provides a description of MPAT's initial design, development and piloting/testing in rural China and India.
- **The MPAT household and village surveys** are provided in the user's guide but have also been translated into a number of languages, which are available for download from the MPAT website.
- **An independent assessment of MPAT** conducted by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre is also available, a link is provided on the MPAT website.
- **A journal paper**, Cohen (2010) *The Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool: A new framework for measuring rural poverty* describes the theoretical foundations for MPAT, it is available in the journal Development and Practice.

Check the IFAD website (www.ifad.org/mpat) for updates and forthcoming publications.

Conclusion

MPAT is equally relevant and applicable at a large or small scale (e.g., from a few villages to donor-supported projects covering thousands of households); it is therefore hoped that MPAT will benefit governments, non-governmental organisations, international financial institutions, research institutions, universities and many others who have vested interests in understanding and addressing rural poverty around the world. But MPAT's utility can go beyond poverty reduction. Its assessments are accessible and hence it can contribute to increase the transparency with regard to how investments in poverty reduction are made. It can also provide a forum for rural people to communicate their perceptions about key dimensions of their lives and livelihoods enabling them to be further involved in the process and to become empowered. It is hoped that the MPAT will be used to improve people's lives, to make certain that their well-being is sufficient to allow them to pursue their individual goals and aspirations and to pursue quality of life as they define it.

Acronyms and abbreviations

COSOPs	country strategic opportunities programmes
CSC	check-score-code
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MPA	Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Project
MPAT	multidimensional poverty assessment tool

Acknowledgements

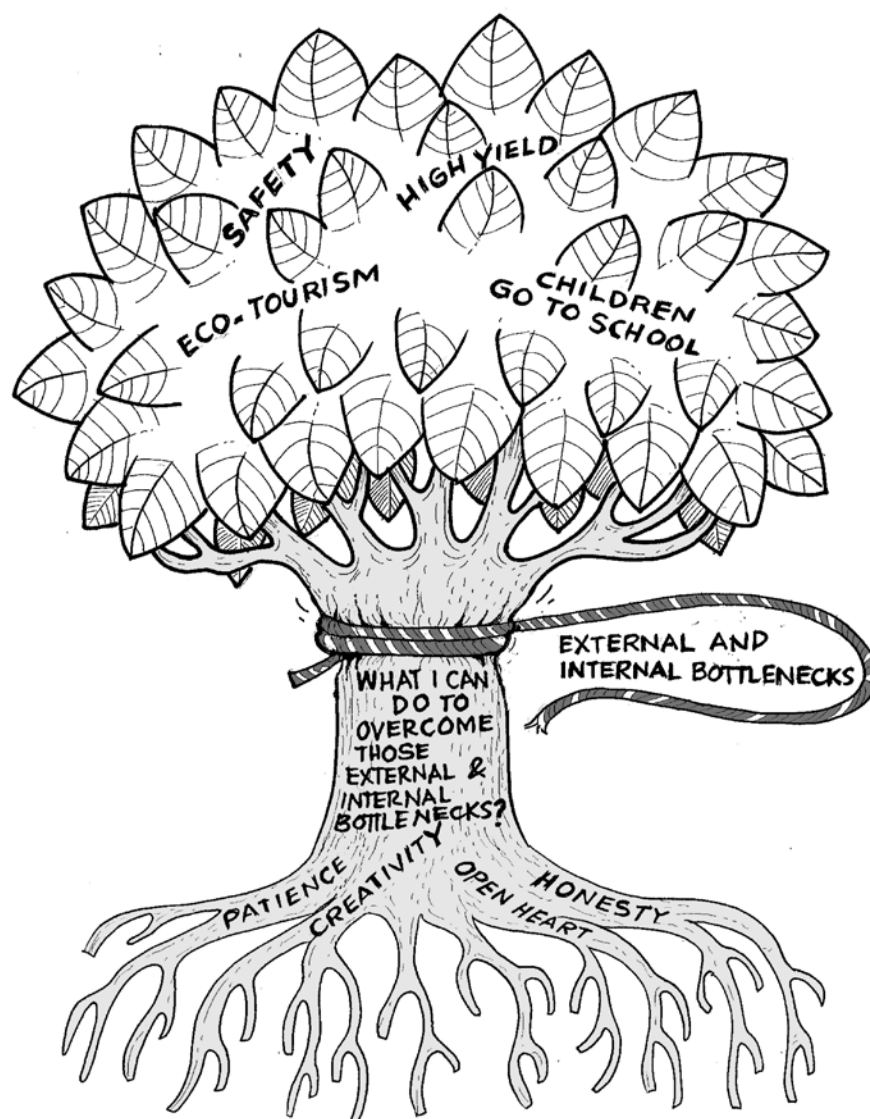
The MPAT is the result of an international collaboration and sharing of ideas and experiences. Thomas Rath at IFAD has supervised the project from its inception through the ongoing finalisation efforts, with support from Roxanna Samii, Rudolph Cleveringa and Mattia Prayer among others. Indeed, a great number of people generously gave their time and support to this initiative. Those involved in the initial (2007-2009) development and testing of MPAT are gratefully acknowledged in the MPAT book, “The Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool: Design, development and application of a new framework for measuring rural poverty”. Those involved in the 2012-2013 finalisation of MPAT will be acknowledged in the forthcoming user’s guide, which will be available at www.ifad.org/mpat.

This article was compiled by Ms. Angela Orlando based on the MPAT book and other resources prepared by Alasdair Cohen.

Bio-sketch and contact details

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Using the Tree of Life Tool for Visioning and Reflecting on Project Progress



Empowering leaders

In Southeast Asia, as in many parts of the world, people from all walks of life work hard to improve their quality of life. Their search for a way out of poverty and towards material well-being is often plagued by formidable obstacles: degraded environmental conditions, social isolation, unsupportive policies and the closed loop of poverty. Those who especially feel trapped in low-yield, low-opportunity livelihood find it difficult

not to have a fatalistic view of life. While struggling to secure food for their families, they do not always value their own potential or the opportunities that surround them.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is working to provide rural people with skills and organisational resources to help rural people lift themselves out of poverty, IFAD has teamed up with the Centre for Creative Leadership, which has pioneered and field-tested a comprehensive model for leadership development at various levels. This is directed towards utilizing the full human potential of the rural poor by fostering leadership development and personal empowerment.

The project's overall objective was to establish locallybased pools of trainers/facilitators and to initiate a reliable and affordable leadership programme for IFAD-supported projects in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, and Vietnam. A total of 16 trainers attended the 8-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) course and went on to replicate the training with farmers in selected communities in their countries. Farmers from all walks of life received the training: leaders and members of cooperatives, farmers from minority groups and typical smallholder farmers.

One of the tools that proved very useful in promoting awareness, empowerment and leadership was the *Tree of Life* tool. This was adapted from two similar tools, an earlier version of the *Tree of Life* (developed by Ncazelo Ncube-Mlilo and David Denborough) and *The Tree of Sustainability* (Arthur Delvecchio). These valuable tools were used to facilitate visualisation and empowerment exercises across many different groups of participants, especially individuals from vulnerable communities (such as HIV orphans or smallholder and woman-headed households).

The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is an empowerment tool designed to explore inner power. It uses the different parts of the tree as metaphor to represent the different aspects of our lives. The roots are our personal values. The trunk relates to the actions that we can take to overcome external and internal bottlenecks (which are squeezing the trunk like a rope). And the leaves are the vision that we have of a better life for us and our family. The use of metaphors and carefully formulated questions help farmers to describe their personal values: What is it

Best to visualise change

Visualisation has a very strong impact on behaviour change. While explanation is a rational thinking process, visualisation engages the person as a whole—senses, feelings, thoughts. For example, during the initial exercises when farmers talked about leadership, they talked about someone else. This person had the power to influence, to do something and the means to achieve set goals. By going through the step-by-step process of describing the different sections of the tree as core values, visions and bottlenecks, their view of leadership changed. They could see many more elements of a leader in their “roots” than they did before. Initially, they felt that they had to get much more help from someone else, an external person. By visualising they could bring out elements of leadership that was a part of them all along.

that they hold dear? What do they firmly believe in? It provides them with a chance to talk about and reflect on their strengths. In a guided process, they continue to talk about their vision for the future: What do they want to achieve in the future? Now linking the two parts together, they look at the trunk: What is “suffocating” the trunk? Farmers explore and investigate the internal and external bottlenecks that block them from using their strengths or taking the risk to try new things. What is it that fosters a culture of blaming others? The value of these tools is that they enable getting into great detail about the specific obstacles in introducing something new or identifying old habits that may need to be changed (trying a new crop or other livelihood activity). The impact can be significant because an analysis using the tool can help identify options that people might decide to try out.



The materials for the training are basic: flipcharts, separate pieces of paper (for writing down the different values and goals), and something to mark with (crayons, water paint, markers, etc.—the more colourful, the better). Based on the experience with the ToT and the subsequent work done with farmers groups, the training takes about half a day (4 hours). In other situations however, it can take longer. It is very important to explore the values in vivid detail and to make the connection to how they can be helpful in overcoming external and internal bottlenecks.

Characteristics of the Tree of Life tool

Uses culturally appropriate metaphors

Metaphors in many cultures and communities evoke powerful meanings and associations for local people. These meanings and associations embrace important values, knowledge and skills, which support farmers in finding answers to the problems and challenges they face. In the trainings in Cambodia, the farmers found it easy to engage with the tool. Trees are plentiful in most communities, and many secure their livelihood from forestry. It is easy for them to imagine what a healthy tree looks like, how to take care of the roots and what benefits the fruits bring.

Links daily life and support structure to farmers dreams

The tree is used to describe what is happening at the level of the individual, but it also connects to the outside world. The participants are encouraged to think back not only about themselves but also their families and communities, as well as their external influences and support networks. They have the opportunity to reflect on, honour and acknowledge the precious relationships that they have with other farmers, the community and their family in terms of their livelihood. The Tree of Life encourages farmers to individually seek out support, not waiting for others to give support. This automatically gives farmers a space to create their own structure for support, learning, and caring for each other.

Links inner strengths to overcoming challenges

By visualising the tree, the participants are making an expanded image of themselves and their inner thoughts, feelings, potential, blockages, etc. People tend to trust and rely more on outside power than on their inner potential. They often find it hard to connect and acknowledge their achievements and the values they bring. They tend to focus on the problems. Visualising the tree helps them to see how their inner strengths and values can overcome the bottlenecks they describe. And they learn to appreciate themselves and their potential.

Exploring the three key elements of the process

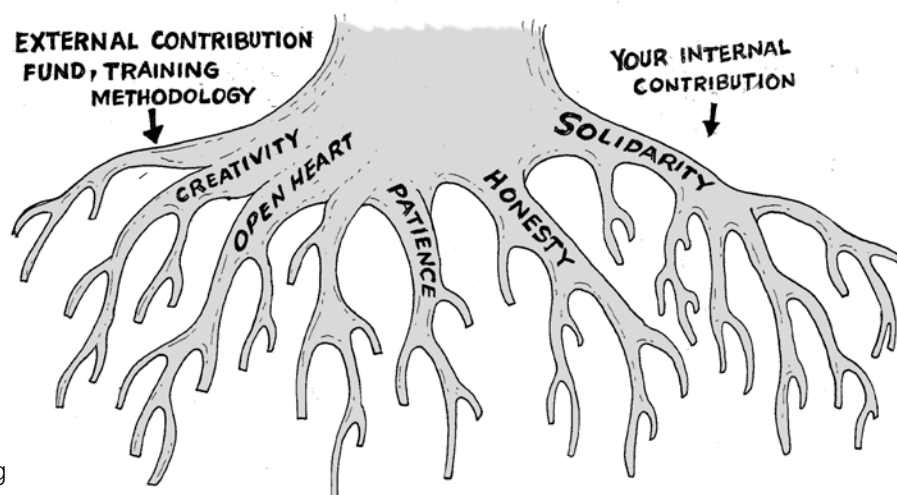
1. The roots

This is a metaphor or prompt that invites farmers to think deeply about their core values. For instance, the facilitator may mention core values such as being “honest, helpful, committed, hardworking”, and will highlight these for the participants.

These are the powers that the individual can tap into to achieve their goals, their **internal contribution**.

Also, there are **external contributions** that feed the “roots” with life-giving water and nutrients. An example is a self-help group where they can save/borrow money for their business. They can attend training on improved farming practices; they may have local

NGOs that could provide seeds or technical support in their farming. The facilitator carefully listens for these key words and highlights them by writing them down on cards. Seeing these concepts physically connected in the tree visual builds an understanding of their connection in real life. The following are some of the questions often used:

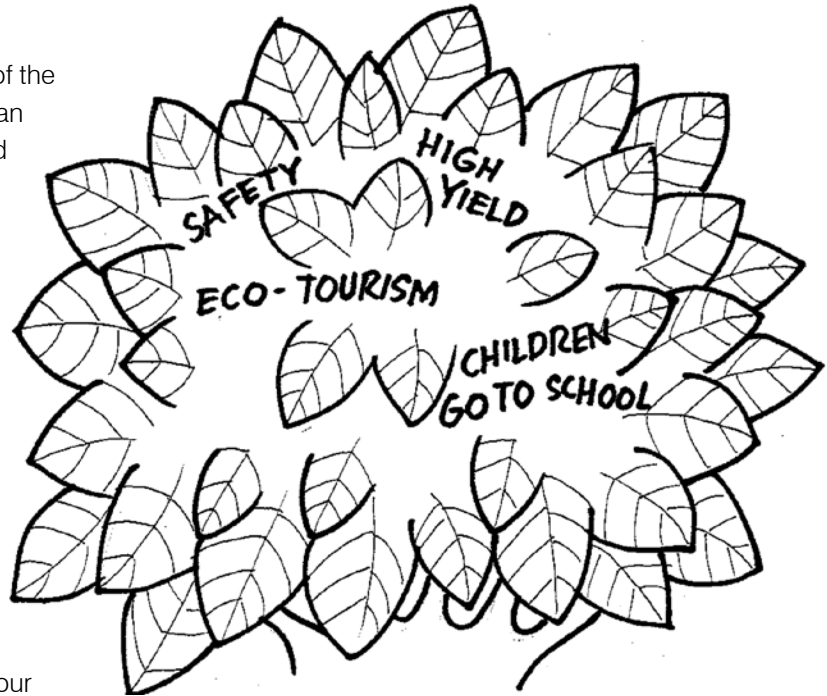


- What are the good things that people say about you?
- What are the values that you live by? What do you think is good for everyone to try to do? (being honest, helpful, generous, hardworking; taking challenges; saving, respecting others)
- How do you feel when someone says these things about you? (proud, honoured, happy, energetic, motivated)

2. The leaves

The main idea behind using a visual of the leaves of a tree is to provide farmers an easy way to talk about their vision and hopes for the future for themselves, their family and their community. Some questions that can be used to explore their vision include

- What do you want for yourself (dreams), something you would like to have as a farmer, a father and a friend? What would make you happiest if you could have it tomorrow?
- What about your family? What do you want for your children? What do you want for your wife/husband?
- Your community? What do you want to see changed in your community, your farmers group and the people around you?



To build a sense of empowerment, the facilitator can ask more questions about the specific values and strengths: How long have these hopes and dreams been alive in your mind? How did you hold onto these hopes and dreams? What has sustained them?

The vision of a better life

During the Tree of Life exercise in Cambodia, farmers shared several hopes and dreams they hold dear in their lives:

- Use new, better techniques in farming
- Cooperate better with farmer groups
- Save money to send children to school
- Develop ecotourism in the community
- Have regular income from their products
- Each family having its own home garden
- People in the community working well with each other

3. The trunk

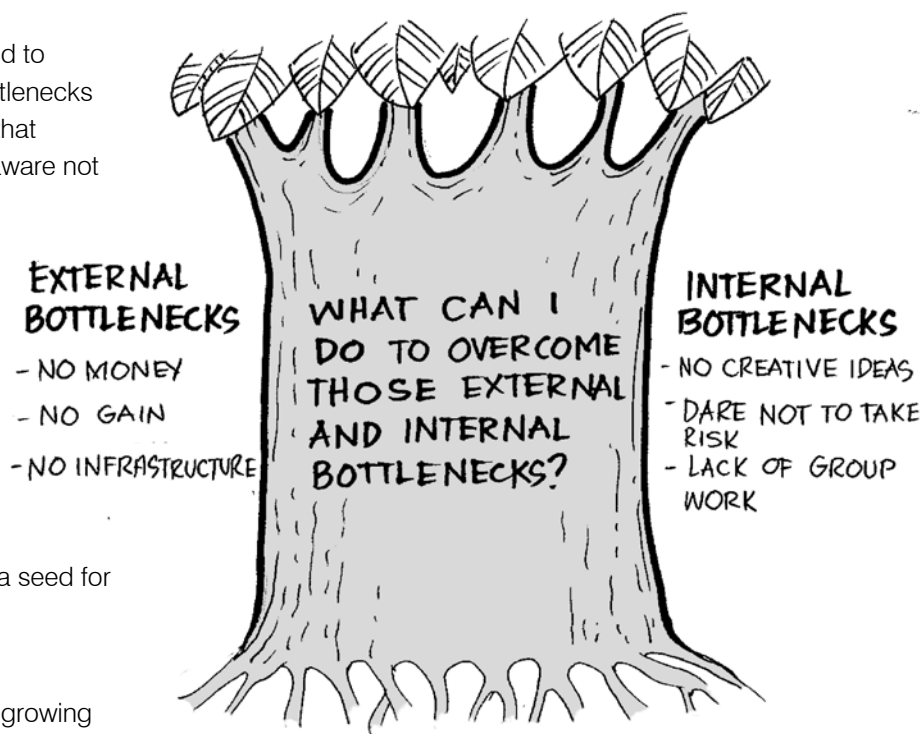
The questions below are used to explore the blockages or bottlenecks faced by farmers, to ensure that participants become better aware not only of the external but also of their own barriers to achieving their dreams. The facilitator can draw additional illustrations around the various tree parts. For example, storm, rain, or other symbols can be added to represent the bottlenecks, a shining sun for goals, and a seed for values. Illustrative questions can be:

- Why are your leaves not growing fast and shining bright green in the sun?
- What would you like to do but don't feel strong enough to do?

This part is the most critical part of the facilitation because typically, mostly *external* barriers will be shared (e.g. no money, no technical support, no solidarity from farmers' teams, domestic violence, no infrastructure, etc.). The *internal* blockages are not mentioned often (e.g., I am afraid to take risks, I give up easily, I don't want to learn new things, I am not sure how to communicate with partners or traders, I am afraid of being blamed, I'd like to blame others, etc.).

The facilitator can use specially drafted questions to address barriers.

- How strong are your values? What else do you need to make your values stronger?
- Give an example of a barrier that you overcame? What did you do to overcome it?
- Who did you get support from?
- How can your core values contribute to overcoming these blocks?
- What are you going to do differently?



The Tree of Life is an activity in which people draw a tree on a big piece of paper. They draw the roots, the ground, the branches, the leaves and the fruits. They are asked to imagine they were a tree and to imagine what it would be like to think of parts of life as parts of a tree. For example, the roots are one's core values that one can hold on to. The branches are one's hopes, dreams and wishes. The trunk may symbolise one's bottlenecks.

These questions help farmers see the linkage between bottlenecks and their core values as well as how those core values can help them to overcome the bottlenecks. Visualisation can help improve the understanding of how they can address external bottlenecks. Gradually, they can understand that dealing with their internal barriers and powers are the key to their development (in the tree analogy... for the leaves to grow well and flourish).

Lessons learned

- The exercise should start and focus on the roots—the core values—encouraging participants to learn from each other and to actively share what they are good at.
- The tree metaphor should be explained in great detail. It is easy for people to grasp this image; however, it may be challenging for them to think creatively about the different elements and come up with exhaustive lists for the values, barriers and goals.
- Internal bottlenecks are the critical point. It is very important for the facilitator to ask more detailed questions to tease out the internal blocks and to make them very visible to the participants. Internal barriers are often more powerful than external ones.
- Follow-up is important. The exercise can be repeated as an evaluation tool months after the initial session to check progress and potential changes in the different “parts of the tree”. It also helps reiterate the importance of the empowerment impact and to draw attention to the actions that the farmer can take to improve their situation.

Conclusion

The Tree of Life as a multifaceted monitoring and evaluation tool, can be applied at many different stages of project planning, implementation and evaluation. It can easily be adapted to the different needs at each stage and works well in a situation where a team of practitioners with different capacity levels needs to develop a joint goal. Regardless of educational level or professional capacity and position, each participant can join and share inputs easily. The tree has many branches and roots and there is enough space for many ideas. It can be used as a planning tool, when project goals need to be developed and the threats and opportunities assessed. It can be further applied as a periodic review tool to check progress.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ToT	training of trainers

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Ms. Bernadin Sang is a facilitator and trainer, focusing on emergent leadership development programmes for field practitioners and senior NGO managers. She has designed and delivered open-access training courses and customised leadership workshops for various organisations. She also provides ongoing coaching and mentoring for development practitioners. Bernadin recently completed a 1-year leadership programme with InWent (GIZ) in Germany.

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Survey to Assess Training Impact



Training is one of the primary means to develop the capacity of poor people to participate and fully benefit from mainstream economic development. IFAD places great emphasis on capacity development and training, which are fundamental to the success of development interventions, from agriculture and infrastructure to rural finance and gender equality. Training and capacity-development activities represent an important component in IFAD-supported activities. In some cases, up to 30% of project resources are dedicated to training and capacity-development activities. Therefore, assessing the efficacy of training programmes and the extent to which the information and skills gained from them are applied to and integrated into trainees' practices is an essential part of a project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) effort.

Some IFAD-funded projects in Bangladesh have been using a simple and efficient tool called the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey. The KAP survey is a simple survey technique used to assess whether

trainees have understood and retained the key points of the training (knowledge), whether they have implemented the training (practice) and if they have not done so, the reasons why not (attitude).

KAP has proven to be a valuable tool for early assessment of training programmes and IFAD is encouraging its inclusion in the M&E programmes of all new and ongoing Bangladesh-based projects.

Why use KAP?

The KAP survey has several immediate advantages. It is particularly easy to use where technologies are disseminated through organised training events like training sessions, demonstrations and field days. The questionnaire is short and sample size is small, so KAP data can be processed quickly and easily using a computer, calculator or hand tabulation. KAP serves a double function:

1. In the case of positive findings (understanding and adoption of activity), it provides the earliest evidence of probable future project benefits and it is reasonable to presume that longer term outcomes and impacts such as increased income, more secure livelihoods, etc. will follow in due course.
2. In the case of negative findings, KAP provides an early warning that there are problems, either with the technology or with the training methods.

A KAP field experience

In December 2007, in Trishal Upazilla, Mymensingh District of rural Bangladesh, a KAP survey was conducted following a training for a new income-generating activity (IGA) on commercial radish production. A total of 108 women received training in commercial radish production (training was exclusively targeted to women's groups) through short sessions during regular women's group meetings. A sample of 36 women who had attended the training event was randomly selected to complete the KAP survey. The survey was conducted just as radish production season was beginning, following the recommendations in the KAP guidelines (see Annex "How to Carry Out a KAP" for a simplified overview of the guidelines).

In practice, the KAP survey is often structured as a P-K-A. The first survey questions investigate whether the trainee is planning to practice the recommended activity. If not, the survey explores the possible reasons for that: Is it because s/he doesn't know how to do it? If s/he does know how but still doesn't intend to practice, does the trainee have a negative attitude toward the activity?

Following this format, a 3-page questionnaire was designed, then pre-tested and revised before being administered to the sample group. The first survey question asked about whether the trainee actually implemented the IGA:

The KAP survey investigates

- Knowledge:** Does the trainee know what to do (i.e., does s/he remember the key points of the training?)
- Attitude:** Does the trainee think the technology is suitable for her/him (and if not, why not)?
- Practice:** Is the trainee actually going to implement the new technology?

Adoption of income-generating activity

- C1. Have you planted, or do you plan to plant, radish **for sale** in this Rabi season? YES / NO
- C2. What is your reason for not planting radish **for sale**? (use separate sheet if more space is needed)
- C3. Have you planted, or do you plan to plant, radish **for home consumption only**, in this Rabi season? YES / NO

Taken from the KAP questionnaire used for the Commercial Radish IGA

Answers to the first set of survey questions showed that nearly 40% of the trainees did NOT implement the IGA. Only 61% had planted radish for sale while 39% either did not plant at all or planted for home consumption only. The training programme had only moderate success. Naturally, project staff wanted to understand the reasons behind the trainees' decision to either adopt the new activity or not.

An IGA training programme sets out to give its trainees the essential technical knowledge required to implement the activity. Therefore, the KAP is designed around 5-6 key technical points of the practice on which participants were trained. As was the case with the commercial radish IGA, successful transfer of knowledge does not necessarily ensure successful implementation of the activity because trainees may not actually put into practice the training they have received, even though they understand what is recommended. Where a trainee's knowledge and practice are not in agreement, it is necessary to assess the reason for the discrepancy. In some cases, this may be due to a negative attitude towards the concerned practice(s).

The KAP for the commercial radish IGA includes questions on 10 key technical points: soil type, variety, planting time, seed rate, planting method, fertilizer, irrigation, thinning, pest control and time of harvest (for leaf and root). For each technical point, three questions were asked— one to check for knowledge, a second to confirm what practice was used and a third to probe for the reasons a particular practice was or was not used, revealing the attitude toward the activity. For example, in the commercial radish IGA KAP, the first technical point about soil type included the following questions:

- D1a. What is your idea of the best soil type for radish? (Checking for KNOWLEDGE)
- D1b. What soil type have you actually used to plant radish? (Confirming PRACTICE)
- D1c. If you did not use the best soil type, why not? (Probing for ATTITUDE)

Taken from the KAP questionnaire used for the Commercial Radish IGA

Findings on knowledge and practice

Overall, the level of technical knowledge among participants was found to be good (Table 1); it was rated poor with reference to only two key points (seed rate and root harvesting time). However, not all of these can be credited to the training programme. Many of the technical approaches to both traditional and commercial radish cultivation are essentially the same; these include soil type, planting time, fertiliser, irrigation, thinning and time of leaf harvest. A farmer entering commercial radish production would not do too badly if she/he simply used traditional practices in these areas.

Nevertheless, there was also good knowledge of some points that are essential for the commercial radish IGA, in particular variety and planting method. Even for these points, however, it is not clear that this training was the source of information, since it is known that farmers draw extensively on advice from seed sellers. It is important for a KAP to be designed to capture information about farmers' existing technical knowledge in order to determine if and what kind of training is required to introduce the new activity. It may be the case that farmers already possess enough knowledge to implement the new activity without additional training. Clarification of this point would require adding survey questions on sources of knowledge.

Trainees' actual practice, however, was much poorer than their knowledge level, with serious gaps on variety, seed rate, planting method and time of harvest. The combined impact is that practically none of the trainees (even of those who carried out radish production for sale) actually adopted the IGA as trained. This was partially due to the unusual conditions in the early part of the 2007-08 radish cultivation season; some trainees attempted to plant improved varieties but were forced back into local varieties by loss of their initial plantings in the heavy rains of October 2007. The KAP results showed that trainees had an overall good command of the knowledge required to engage in commercial radish production, making it unlikely that this was an obstacle. So, what happened?

Table 1. Summary of technical knowledge and practice.

Technical Point	Level of knowledge	Level of practice
Soil type	Good	Good
Variety	Good	Poor
Planting time	Good	Good
Seed rate	Poor	Poor
Planting method	Good	Poor
Fertiliser	Good	Good
Irrigation	Good	Poor*
Thinning	Good	Good
Pest control	Good	Poor*
Time of leaf harvest	Good	Good
Time of root harvest	Poor	Poor

*Note: *Mainly because the practices concerned had not been required up to the time of the survey.*

Additional reasons for non-adoption of the commercial radish IGA

The survey results indicated various reasons given by trainees for not implementing the commercial radish activity. A quarter of the trainees were prevented from implementing this because of factors beyond their control (family or personal illness).

On the other hand, 'lack of land' is a factor that trainees probably could have predicted before they took the training; it possibly indicates the need for better participant selection. The case where training was not implemented because the trainee's husband was not available is illustrative of a wider problem with gender-targeted training, which is further discussed below.

Survey results also inferred that the probable reasons for non-adoption of the commercial radish IGA could be organised into three categories. The first is strongly related to attitudes toward the practice, the second with the training delivery and materials and the third is an inability to implement due to factors beyond the trainees' control.

Uncertainty about the benefit of the new activity (*attitude toward the practice*)

Probably the most important factor influencing the non-adoption of the IGA is that radish production using traditional technology is already well-established in the area. Trainees were not given any definite guidance on the extent to which the IGA is superior to the traditional technology. This may be partly due to weaknesses in training delivery (discussed below). However, it also seems there was no financial or farming system analysis of the IGA vis-à-vis traditional technology *before* the training programme was launched. Moving from the traditional system to the IGA requires additional expense (higher cost of hybrid seeds) and more labour (because of need for line planting) and entails sacrificing income from sales of radish leaf as a vegetable and loss of opportunities for intercropping and succession cropping. It is possible that farmers made their own appraisal of the relative costs and benefits and concluded, in the absence of project information to the contrary, that the traditional system offered greater rewards.

Inadequate training materials and delivery

One possible explanation is that the training did not adequately convey to the trainees the superiority of the IGA over the traditional technology. The 'training' was delivered in the form of group discussions during the general meetings of women's project groups and without distribution of handouts or other visual aids. In retrospect, this may not have been the most effective method of transmitting technical information, especially

Table 2. Reasons for not implementing commercial Radish IGA

Trainee response	%*
Illness	25.0
No land	25.0
Husband too busy with off-farm work	12.5
Plans to plant in future	12.5
No reason given	25.0
	100.0

Note: *% of all reasons actually recorded.

where detailed knowledge of quantities is required (e.g., for fertiliser). Offering longer training sessions focused solely on the IGA would likely be more effective and improve trainees' understanding of the benefits associated with the improved technology.

Reasons beyond personal control

It is also possible that many trainees understood the advantages of the commercial radish IGA technology but were unable to implement it due to reasons beyond their control. There is definite evidence for this:

- Some trainees were hindered by the unusual weather conditions in October 2007. These trainees might adopt the IGA in the following year, but they may also be deterred by the risk involved. Hybrid radish seed is relatively expensive, and this investment is lost if the crop is destroyed by adverse weather. Other trainees reported that personal or family illness prevented them from carrying out the activity.
- More important is that, in the social conditions of the project area, most women trainees depend on male relatives to carry out the actual cultivation. The views of trained women are therefore likely to be overruled or disregarded by men who were not part of the training event. Perhaps, a majority of trainees effectively had no control over the field operations for radish cultivation. This is a common situation in female-targeted IGA training in Bangladesh (it was a major factor among female aquaculture trainees in the Fourth Fisheries Project).

How are KAP results used?

Recommendations to improve the commercial radish project

One of the outcomes of the commercial radish KAP survey was a set of recommendations for important project improvements that could increase the chances of future adoption of the commercial radish IGA:

1. Based on the conclusion that uncertainty about the commercial radish IGA was probably the most important factor in its non-adoption, a technical and financial analysis of traditional radish production vis-à-vis the commercial radish IGA should be carried out. The results, if favourable, should be emphasised in the training programme and disseminated through input dealers and other information sources used by farmers.
2. Significant changes to the design and content of the training programme should be made:
 - Training sessions should be longer, separated from general meetings, and be more structured with a well-designed training module approved by project authorities;
 - Training should be delivered earlier in the year when there is still time to influence farmers' decisions about the choice of technology;
 - Training sessions should be made dual-sex (women group members should be accompanied by the male relative who will do the cultivation, provide money for seed and fertiliser, etc.);
 - Simple graphic hand-outs should be provided showing the key points of commercial radish technology (especially for quantified recommendations such as fertiliser rates);

- Consideration should be given to the use of demonstration plots on farmers' land with field-day training at key stages of the radish cropping cycle.

Lessons from other KAP survey experiences

To date, IFAD projects have carried out eight KAP surveys in Bangladesh. On the whole, the surveys have highlighted a number of weaknesses in training—such as selection of training topics and delivery of training—but they have also provided evidence of successful knowledge transfer and at least some adoption as a result of training.

In some cases, the results of the KAP survey translated into specific changes based on the lessons learned. For example:

- Improved flip charts with better visual aids were introduced into a beef fattening training course after it was discovered that knowledge was low partly because of poor training quality.
- Training of the husbands of women's group members is now strongly recommended after the commercial radish KAP showed that most of the field work was done by men and that the trained women had little influence on the adoption of the IGA.
- Practical, hands-on training on vegetable production was included in the Homestead Vegetable Gardening project to give trainees some experience that could motivate them to adopt practice.
- Project design has also increasingly used "value chain" approaches to ensure availability of inputs alongside knowledge from training programmes.

These examples show the potential that a KAP survey has for continual project improvement, increasing the chances that specific poverty reduction measures might be adopted at the village level.

A general approach to identifying and introducing IGAs

An unanticipated benefit of the KAP results was the ability to draw larger lessons from this one project experience. The finding that most farmers probably viewed the proposed IGA as being less beneficial than their current practice has significant implications for the identification and introduction of IGAs in general.

The first lesson is that a thorough analysis should be made before any IGA technology is selected for inclusion in a village-level training programme. Such an analysis should examine

- farmers' traditional technical practice in any existing related technology (including gender roles in operating the concerned technologies);
- the relative costs and benefits of the traditional practices vis-à-vis the proposed IGA; and
- farmers' levels of technical knowledge and their sources of technical information.

The proposed IGA should be included in the programme only if the results of the analysis are positive. Even then, the conditions under which adoption of the IGA is superior to traditional practices should be clearly communicated. Inclusion of IGAs on a 'wish-list' basis should be avoided.

Second, all potential IGAs should be screened for their relevance to achieving the overall goals of the project, vis-à-vis the cost and time required to develop technical packages that are clearly superior to existing livelihood opportunities. There is no point in sponsoring IGA training, which cannot make a significant contribution to poverty reduction or which theoretically promotes gender equity but is actually dependent on men's decisions and control over implementation and benefits. Project management should carefully consider whether small gains in income, livelihood security or gender equity justify the allocation of project resources, especially when alternative IGAs are available.

Conclusion

It is often assumed that the sharing of knowledge in the form of training programmes will translate into behaviour changes, which is ultimately what development interventions aim at. It is good practice to test such assumptions to understand under what conditions they hold and under what conditions they don't. Instruments such as the KAP survey permit users, in a relatively fast and inexpensive way, to gain a better understanding of the impact of training on the integration and adoption of new knowledge and practices. Analysis of KAP survey results facilitates an important process of reflection and learning that is crucial in development practice and key to increase project impact.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
DFID	Department for International Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGA	income-generating activity
KAP	knowledge, attitude and practice
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organisation

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Annex: How to carry out a KAP

1. Select the technology

This should be guided by the importance of the various technologies for overall impact of the subproject.

2. Define the study coverage

This could be the whole project or one zone, or one district within a zone or all the districts covered by one NGO. Each subdivision is called a *domain of study*. If separate results are required (e.g., separate results by zone) there will be one domain of study for each subdivision required, and *each domain of study must be sampled separately*.

3. Select the sample

Make a list (technically called a sample frame) of the trainees who have received training on a specific technology by compiling the attendance lists from training events. *The KAP survey success depends on accurate maintenance of the training event attendance registers* (including such information as group name/number, trainee's name, father's/husband's name, and village) to permit tracing individual trainees, even after several months have elapsed). Then, select a sample according to the instructions in the KAP guidelines. The sample *must be randomly selected* and *no section of the group must be excluded* from the possibility of being selected.

4. Design and test the questionnaire

Survey designers and training providers should work together to single out the key points of each technology that are essential for successful implementation. The knowledge section of the questionnaire should then be structured according to the list of key points. A maximum of five or six key points is recommended in order to keep the questionnaire short and simple. The questionnaire should be pre-tested by conducting interviews with a small number of trainees and any necessary modifications should be made.

5. Train the data collection team

The training should consist of a short classroom session—maximum one day, including practice interviews by the data collection personnel on each other. Immediately follow the training with one or two days of practice interviews with trainees who have actually received training on the selected technology.

6. Set up the analysis and reporting systems

When the questionnaire has been finalised, the data analysis system should be prepared based on the questionnaire structure. At this stage, it is also helpful to prepare an outline of the eventual report, including blank tables for each category of results (e.g., % trainees deciding to implement the technology, % who know each of the key points of the technology, etc.). This can be done in parallel with training the data collection personnel. KAP can be analysed by computer, using a spreadsheet programme (Excel or a similar program), or by pencil-and-paper methods with a hand calculator.

7. Collect the data

This should take place just before the time the trainees would start implementing the selected technology. Especially for crop technologies, it is important not to be too late in starting data collection because farmers will be busy with the actual planting and they may be unwilling or unavailable for interview. It is expected that, for a typical KAP study, 1-2 weeks will be required to complete data collection.

8. Analyse the data

After all the interviews have been completed, the filled-in questionnaires should be returned to the subproject management unit for analysis. Results from the Practice and Knowledge sections of the questionnaire should be presented as percentages. The Attitude section of the questionnaire will contain various responses about why the trainees do not want to implement the technology. These should be grouped according to type of reason (e.g., shortage of labour, low price, excessive risk) and a percentage should then be calculated for the trainees giving each type of reason. Data analysis should take about 1 week.

9. Report the results

Present results in a short report (usually 4-5 pages). Design a table that includes each question and percentages of positive/negative responses for each one. Comment briefly on each result. Reporting should be completed within 2 weeks after completing the analysis.

10. Carry out a results survey

The value of the KAP findings will be increased if they are matched with actual results achieved by the trainees. For this purpose, the KAP sample trainees can be re-visited after they have completed one production cycle (e.g., after harvest for crop technologies, after sale of the first batch for fish-drying, etc.) to obtain information about actual production levels, prices received and any problems they encountered in implementing the technology. This information can be used to improve the technology and training methods for the following training cycle.

Using Case Studies to Expand the Scope and Depth of Standard Monitoring and Evaluation



Bac Kan is a very poor mountainous province located in northeast Vietnam. The people who live in these impoverished highlands have little opportunity to develop their livelihood because of limited access to resources (capital, information, knowledge, technology and market access). The Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development project (3PAD) aims to achieve sustainable and equitable poverty reduction and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in Bac Kan by establishing a framework for sustainable and profitable agroforestry development.

Since 2009, through the Community Development Fund, 3PAD has helped generate income opportunities for the rural poor. After 3 years of implementation, the interventions had produced substantial outputs and outcomes in the field of agroforestry (for example, livestock development and new crop plantations). However, the activities were not adequately recorded and reported both in terms of quantitative and qualitative information. A mid-term review recommended that the project improve its results-based management. After consultations with project stakeholders and partners, the M&E Division identified several methods for improving M&E. One of these methods was the case study approach. With support from the IFAD Vietnam Office, project staff were trained in the use of the case study approach in their regular monitoring work.

Central elements of a case study design

- **Research questions.** 'What', 'When', 'Where', 'Why' and 'How' (4W+1H)
- **Research design.** It links the data to be collected to the initial questions of the study, providing a conceptual framework and an action plan for arriving at conclusions.
- **Theoretical propositions.** They serve to focus attention on specific issues, limit the scope and suggest possible links between phenomena.
- **Units of analysis.** The main units must be at the same level as the study questions, and are usually comparable to those from the studies.
- **Logical links between data and propositions.** Pieces of information are matched to observed patterns in the data and then compared with general propositions looking for a fit.
- **Criteria for interpretation of findings.** It involves iteration between propositions and data, matching sufficiently similar and contrasting patterns from the data to the propositions and deriving subsequent conclusions.

Procedure for conducting a case study

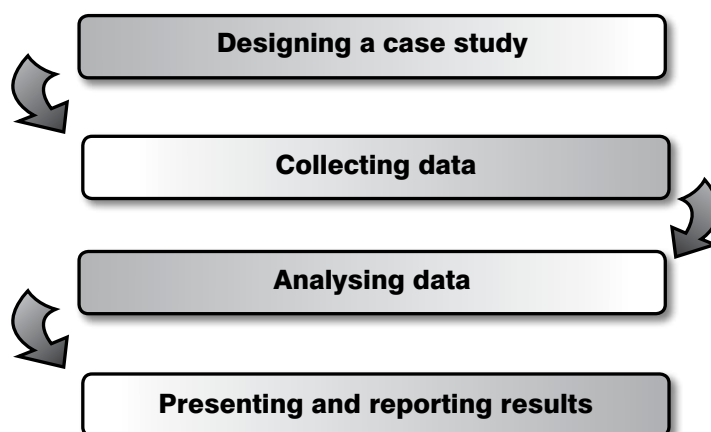


Figure 1. Steps in conducting a case study.

The single-case study is the preferred option for conducting case studies in the 3PAD project. The data are collected in the following ways:

1. Collecting physical articles/outputs
2. Collecting documents such as contracts, memos and reports
3. Conducting open-ended interviews
4. Conducting focused interviews
5. Making direct observations
6. Carrying out participant observations

The structure of a case study report

A case study usually includes the following parts:

1. **Executive summary.** A concisely written section, less than one page, placed at the front of the report. It briefly summarises the major points of the case. It describes the major issue, the proposed solution and the logic supporting the choice of solution.
2. **Problem statement.** Presents the central issue(s) or major problem(s) in the case.
3. **Alternatives.** Discusses all relevant alternatives. Briefly presents the major arguments for and against each alternative. State any assumptions and the impact of constraints on each alternative.
4. **Conclusion.** Presents the analysis and the logic behind a particular solution. Also discusses the reasons for rejecting the other alternatives.
5. **Implementation.** It outlines a plan of action that will lead to effective implementation of the decision.

Using case studies in results-based management

Case study evaluations examine the outcome of each project component (changes in economic benefits, income, increase of employment, benefits distribution, cost effectiveness, etc.) with the aim of systematising lessons learned and good practices. In fact, both qualitative and quantitative tools can be applied flexibly, but in the 3PAD context, the case study method was seen as the most relevant and appropriate tool for evaluation. The differences in benefits between the use of case studies and the use of other tools (both qualitative and quantitative) can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Case studies vs other tools.

Other tools	Case studies
<p>The report, based on existing data from the 3PAD surveys, covered the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Income of participants in the sectors ▪ Income sources and contribution of 3PAD projects' products and/or services ▪ Poverty profile ▪ Land, labour and occupations ▪ General production/ crop patterns ▪ Production of 3PAD projects' products and/or services ▪ Level of development of 3PAD-related industries ▪ Women's participation in production 	<p>The case studies expand the scope of the study by uncovering real stories, real enterprise and in-depth research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living standard of local people ▪ Equitable and sustainable ways of generating income for the poor ▪ Stakeholders' assessment of their participation in 3PAD activities ▪ Insights on beneficiaries' perceptions, feelings, opinions and concerns ▪ Cost effectiveness, cost-benefit analysis for specific cases ▪ Risk assessment of doing business with the rural poor ▪ Gender issues

Case studies can be used to assess project impact at the commune and village levels, directly through interviews with key informants from the target group (poor farmers, ethnic minorities, women, etc.). The outputs of case studies often include measurements of beneficiaries' perception, short-term outcomes of an activity or sets of activities, the application of what the local population learned through project trainings, benefits or effectiveness of using new techniques, etc. The information is classified and categorised into groups/topics, which are further related to the project's components and subcomponents. The results from the case studies also need to be compared with the indicators (levels 1 and 2) of the project's logframe in order to verify progress toward achieving project goal and objectives.

The 3PAD project conducts quarterly case studies. A total of 50 case studies have been completed at the time of writing. They are administered by the project's M&E Division, including four provincial-level staff and three district-level staff, with support from some commune staff as translators and guides. The topics are chosen by the head of the M&E Division, based on the need assessment of each project's component and the annual M&E plan. After each quarter, the project M&E Division holds a meeting to share and discuss progress as reported by the surveys and case studies. Table 2 shows the role and responsibilities of the case study team members.

Table 2. Role and responsibilities of a case study team.

Members/position	Role	Responsibilities
Head of M&E Division/M&E specialist	Team leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Choosing topics, designing case formats▪ Defining data collection protocol, defining scope▪ Developing case study reports
Provincial staff	Facilitator/data collector/ interviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conducting interviews, collecting data▪ Working directly with key informants
District staff	Interviewer/investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assisting provincial staff in interviews; taking notes▪ Checking data validity, cross-checking results
Commune staff	Support/translator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Providing logistical support and translation

Lessons learned

The problems found, the recommendation and the implementation of case studies can help the project management board make appropriate adjustments in project implementation. For example, in some communes, many people did not want to grow new species of forage on sloping land because they did not have the skills or know-how. They also thought that the new forage species were harmful and unsuitable as feed for livestock. They wanted to protect their land from environmental degradation.

Substantial gender-level impacts of interventions were uncovered. The case studies showed that most of the households were headed by men and that women were responsible for almost all activities on their land. The case studies resulted in an adjustment of the forage development strategy. Now, farmers grow the new grass in a group; one farmer functions as the group leader, supported by the project's nursery specialist. To ensure gender balance, new divisions of responsibilities in the forage groups were developed and monitored by the group leader. For example, men are responsible for livestock and transport while the women take care of harvesting and new planting.

Challenges and limitations

There are not enough trained project staff to adequately administer the case studies (i.e., inadequate capacities). Sometimes, the subjective feelings of the interviewer may influence the case study (researcher bias). For example, a quick look at an irrigation system in a village during summer may give the impression that the construction works are well-managed. However, its quality needs to be checked also during the winter season.

In a newly established project, many activities cannot be covered by case studies because of resource constraints (manpower, time, finances) and because impacts require some time before they become visible. Interpretation of case studies can be very time-consuming in the case of cross-case reports (i.e., comparing numerous case studies across different interventions).



Conclusion

Despite the challenges and limitations related to adoption, the case study is an appropriate tool for the project management board to have an overview of activities at different levels. A case study can cover a wider range of project outcomes than the broader survey. Case studies provide not only a measurement of real outputs, outcomes and expected/

unexpected results; they also allow for the inclusion of stakeholders' views of key success factors and problems. Furthermore, case studies or sets of case studies are a very useful knowledge management tool for sharing practical experiences and lessons learned by different projects.



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Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

M&E monitoring and evaluation

3PAD Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development

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Using the Key Informant Interview Technique for Collecting Quick Impact Assessment Information



In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, which destroyed large areas along the Sri Lankan coast, the government gave priority to the affected people and by facilitating them return to their homes by rehabilitating the destroyed housing infrastructure and by restoring amenities.

The IFAD-supported Post-Tsunami Coastal Rehabilitation and Resource Management Programme (PTCRRMP) partnered with the state-owned National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) and the tsunami-affected communities to undertake the construction of 1,000 new houses for tsunami victims. The programme was able to complete 890 new units. The programme wanted to study and assess the outcome of its

Tsunami devastation

In Sri Lanka, about 36,000 people lost their lives; 80% of the coastline was affected and more than 110,000 houses were damaged or destroyed. Fishing folks living in simple houses and shelters were the main victims of the tsunami disaster. More than 7,000 fishermen died and more than 300,000 fishing families were displaced. About three-fourths of the coastal fishing vessels were either completely destroyed or seriously damaged.

housing construction activity and to share relevant information materials with similar projects across Sri Lanka and beyond. The key informant interview (KII) method was selected as the most appropriate tool to collect this information.

Housing rehabilitation

During the post-tsunami recovery phase, the Government of Sri Lanka used two approaches: (i) donor-driven housing construction and (ii) owner-driven housing construction. Families that opted for relocation to other areas in the country were provided with housing following donor guidelines.

After a careful evaluation of two ongoing schemes, IFAD and the Government of Sri Lanka reached an agreement to apply the owner-driven approach in its housing development component. The beneficiary community agreed to partner with the NHDA to obtain technical assistance (designs, house plans and overall supervision of the project).



The PTCRRMP management and IFAD local officers were very keen to evaluate the seemingly successful implementation of the housing intervention. The staff observed that the values of some houses were higher than the value of the grant provided (Rs. 500,000). It was decided that an outcome assessment be done to obtain more detailed information about the use of the grants and the construction of new housing stock.

Key informant interviews: how they were done

Selection of project interventions and planning

The key questions/research objectives were identified by the project officers. In a broader discussion among key project staff from the national, district and local levels, the following three key research questions were raised:

1. Is the housing construction process being effectively managed and does it respond to the needs of the community?
2. How can the housing construction process be improved and what innovations can be introduced?
3. What are the lessons learned that can be shared through knowledge management materials?

Key Informant Interview (KII)

The term 'key informant' refers to a person who can provide detailed information and opinions on a particular subject based on his or her unique knowledge of a particular issue. Anyone can be a key informant (young/old, male/female, rich/poor, various ethnic or religious groups and others). KIIs are open-ended, semi-structured interviews. Every interview has clear objectives, which determine what kind of information is needed and how this information will be used.

Considering the information needed, the project officers decided to apply the key informant interview tool to collect the required data.

Selection of key informants

Key informants were selected from five project districts where newly constructed houses had been completed. The district officers provided assistance in the selection of these informants. The individuals to be interviewed were selected by convening groups of local beneficiaries. This approach was designed to enhance local ownership and to ensure that the opinions of the broader community were represented by the individuals interviewed. The key informants for this study included representatives of beneficiaries, women's groups, local leaders and community elders, representatives of district and government civil officers.



Preparation of performance questions and data collection formats

Based on the outcome indicators extracted from the project logframe, simple open-ended questions were formulated. When possible, background information on the interviewee and his or her experience with the project was utilised to revise the questions.

Training interviewers on data collection

The interviews were primarily conducted by the M&E officers from the programme. They were given a short training on KII techniques, using the IFAD KII tool as a guide manual. The training focused on ensuring the quality and accuracy of the data, so that data collection and analysis would be consistent across different locations and enumerators (especially when external enumerators had to be employed).

Interviews and data collection

While visiting the sites where the housing construction was completed, the M&E officers (and, when needed, external enumerators) conducted interviews. They also walked around the houses to carry out direct site observations. This approach was perceived to be the most appropriate as it allowed the interviewees to freely express their opinions. The officers could also conduct observations and subsequently use this information in the construction of follow-up questions for the second batch of interviewers. This combined approach helped collect a rich set of observations and inputs from key project beneficiaries.

Data analysis and documentation

A specific format was used to collect and record information (see Table 1 for a listing of the key questions and answers provided). Depending on the results of the primary findings and the field observations, a second round of interviews could be conducted to collect additional information.

Producing knowledge management materials

All data and information, including photographs and other audio and video materials recorded during the KII process, were used to develop articles for the IFAD Sri Lanka Newsletter. The photos and video clips taken during the process were also published by various media outlets. Several local radio programmes also broadcast the key findings and information.

Publishing and knowledge sharing

The knowledge and experiences captured were published in an article 'Owner-driven housing construction: a cost-effective model for rebuilding the lives affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami'. The experiences and good practices derived from this previous construction process were then applied in the second phase of construction of 100 new houses in Ampara District in eastern Sri Lanka.

Table 1. Questions and answers from key informant interviews.

Specific Question	Answers and collected information
<p>Are the houses constructed well and in accordance with floor plans and regulations?</p> <p>Are the beneficiaries satisfied with the houses?</p>	<p>The beneficiaries demonstrated very high satisfaction.</p> <p>The cultural values of the three main communities—Muslim, Sinhala and Tamil—were considered in the design and construction of each house (e.g., location of kitchen, well, toilet). This was made possible by utilising the owner-driven approach to post-tsunami reconstruction of housing.</p>
<p>How did the community participate in project implementation?</p> <p>Did women participate in planning and monitoring?</p>	<p>Community development committees were formed.</p> <p>The community was involved in planning, monitoring and procurement. Women played a major role by helping during construction (physical labour, cooking, etc.).</p>
<p>How were the beneficiaries involved in the construction process?</p> <p>How did they benefit?</p>	<p>Bulk purchases (such as cement, tiles and steel) were made from local wholesalers. This approach ensured significant cost savings and improved the quality of procured material.</p> <p>The beneficiaries also directly supplied locally available materials, such as bricks, sand and timber.</p> <p>The beneficiaries provided unskilled labour.</p> <p>They also received informal training in masonry and carpentry. Some of the beneficiaries now work as semiskilled workers alongside experienced masons and carpenters.</p>

Specific Question	Answers and collected information
What are the perceived socioeconomic benefits?	<p>The housing stock is recovering. Larger houses of bigger value are being built to satisfy beneficiary needs.</p> <p>The village economy has expanded due to the additional funds that are flowing into the villages and auxiliary services that are required (food, etc.).</p> <p>New employment and business opportunities have emerged.</p> <p>The communities empowered.</p> <p>Good inter-community relations in the village exist.</p>
How have the new houses changed living conditions and well-being?	<p>There are more social events.</p> <p>There is reduced tension within households (visible as reported incidents of domestic violence).</p> <p>Health conditions, social status and social relations have improved.</p>

Lessons learned

- KII is a simple, effective tool for collecting specific information within a short time period.
- One-on-one interviews are more effective for collecting accurate first-hand information than other methods such as group interviews.
- Community consultation and beneficiary agreement regarding the informants to be interviewed are vital factors for the success of the study.
- Data collected by M&E officers tend to be more reliable and accurate than data gathered by external enumerators.
- Using advanced technical aides (such as digital cameras and audio recorders) during the KII was very helpful in keeping the interviewees focused and interested.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KII	key informant interview
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NHDA	National Housing Development Authority
PTCRRMP	Post-Tsunami Coastal Rehabilitation and Resource Management Programme

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Using Functionality Surveys to Assess User Association Performance



The establishment of infrastructure for agriculture is a major part of the Philippine government's investment portfolio. It is intended to help the rural sector not just to overcome poverty but also to involve people and enhance their engagement in the process of rural development.

For government and funding institutions, sustainability is an important thing to consider to get maximum benefits out of these interventions. In this regard, such interventions are coupled with capacity-building activities to enable the people to have a bigger stake in the process.

In agriculture, irrigation systems and facilities are among the public goods targeted for delivery to farmers nationwide. Trainings are conducted to help farmers increase their production and, at the same time, make them better stewards of the interventions given to them.

This led to the development of tools for assessing plans and programmes and for looking at implementation and sustainability concerns. In the case of the rehabilitation of communal irrigation systems (CIS), farmers, organised into irrigator associations (IAs), serve as the development partners in the operation and maintenance of the CIS.

The Annual Functionality Survey

The annual functionality survey (AFS) is used as a tool to assess the progress of IA development and empowerment of farmer-beneficiaries in implementing plans and programmes. It is a tool developed by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and adopted by the RaFPEP-IRPEP in implementing the IA strengthening component.

The survey gives an overview of an IA's current status, helps identify the areas that need improvement and helps assess the capability and readiness of the IAs to operate and maintain irrigation facilities.

This tool was formulated with the following objectives:

1. Assess the functionality status and performance of IAs;
2. Identify areas where IAs are functional or non-functional;
3. Provide the basis for determining appropriate development programmes for IAs; and
4. List activities and fund requirement for inclusion in the annual work plan and budget (AWPB).

Rationale

The irrigator associations' capability to manage their organisation and undertake O&M responsibilities are developed through trainings, which is mostly funded by the government and donor agencies for a certain period of time.

The Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme

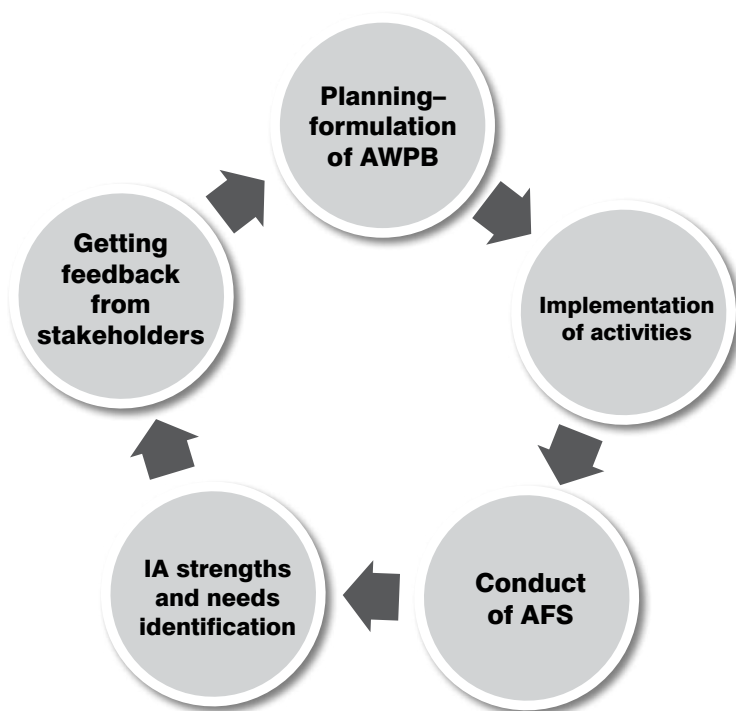
The Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme (RaFPEP) has been implemented since 2009 by the Department of Agriculture and its line agencies: the National Irrigation Administration, the National Food Authority and the Agricultural Training Institute. Jointly funded by the European Union, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and Government of the Philippines, RaFPEP aims to contribute poverty reduction by uplifting the situation of rural farming households. It has two projects – the Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project (RaSSFIP) and the Irrigated Rice Production Enhancement Project (IRPEP). RaSSFIP provided high-quality seeds to marginal farmers nationwide; it was completed in 2011. IRPEP is for implementation until 2015 in three regions and six provinces to increase production and productivity of irrigated lands not just by improving rural infrastructure and facilities and providing inputs but also by empowering the beneficiaries—the farmers— as would-be stewards of the interventions.

One of the components of IRPEP is the strengthening of IAs. Farmer-members are given training on the operation and maintenance (O&M) activities of their irrigation system and the affairs of their association. The aim is to make IAs become active partners of the government in rural development.

AFS is not just used in the post-implementation phase. It is an essential part of the IA strengthening cycle and is also used in the mapping out of activities for farmers' organisations.

The functionality survey provides project implementers with information on which aspects of associations' development are weak and which ones need interventions through capability building in the form of workshops, field trips and visitations and technology enhancement trainings.

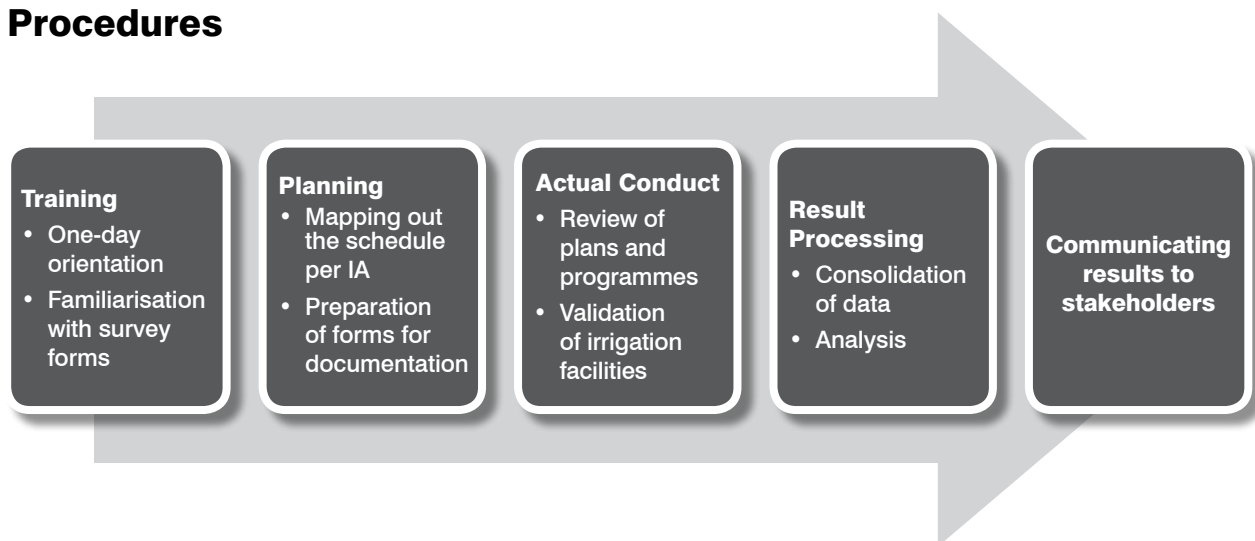
Results indicate the empowerment of beneficiaries in terms of managing their IA affairs—i.e., planning the management of irrigation-related agricultural production. Likewise, collaboration between line agencies implementing different components of the project and local authorities is improved. The result is a strengthened NIA-IA partnership in irrigation development in support of the agricultural production programme of the government.



Coverage and schedule

The AFS covers all IAs with irrigation systems that are in the operation and maintenance stage of development. As one of the M&E activities of the NIA-Irrigation Management Office (IMO), the AFS is conducted yearly to evaluate the previous year's accomplishments and performance.

Procedures



Step 1: Training of IMO staff

A one-day orientation is conducted for irrigation staff involved in the survey. Activities include familiarisation with the forms to be used and the IA documents to be reviewed during the survey. Another day is allocated for the trained staff to further familiarise themselves with the process of conducting the survey.

Step 2: AFS schedule planning

The Institutional Development Unit (IDU) of provincial irrigation offices prepares the schedule and plans the conduct of the AFS. The institutional development officers and/or senior water resources facilities technician, in turn, relay the schedule to the IAs so that the necessary documents for evaluation will be prepared. Likewise, the IDU prepares AFS Form 1 to be distributed to survey evaluators.

Step 3: Conducting the AFS

The AFS involves a one-day session conducted per irrigator association. Activities in the morning include a review of plans, programmes, implementation and accomplishments in the association office in the presence of the Board of Trustees (BOTs), IA officers and sector leaders. The evaluators and IA BOT, officers and leaders discuss the evaluation process making use of AFS Form 1. Field validation is conducted in the afternoon with the team visiting the irrigation system to check on its status and address issues that may have been raised.

Step 4: Processing of AFS results

Based on the data gathered, the evaluators rate the functionality of the association as stated in AFS Form 1. Accomplished forms are submitted to the IDU of the provincial IMO for the preparation of AFS Form 2. Form 2 is then submitted to the IDU of the regional office for consolidation and submission to the NIA central office.

Step 5: Communicating results to stakeholders

The results of the regional functionality surveys are sent back to the IMO IDU to for revision of the AWPB of specific IAs, which may need additional capability building to improve performance in the succeeding years. Likewise, the IDU of the IMO feeds back the results to the IAs concerned. Their ratings in the AFS are presented and discussed; possible changes in their plans and programmes for the year may be proposed. Capability-building activities are scheduled accordingly.

Indicators

To determine whether the IAs have incorporated what they have learned from their trainings, criteria are set to standardise the conduct of functionality surveys and make it easier for evaluators to use indicators.

The major groups of indicators/criteria for evaluating the functionality of an IA are the following:

1. **Irrigation and IA management-related indicators.** These cover the responsibilities/activities that an IA performs in relation to irrigation and IA management.
 - a. **Operation and maintenance**—covers O&M planning, O&M implementation and O&M performance.
 - b. **Organisation**—includes IA membership, conduct of meetings and maintenance/safekeeping of IA records/files.
 - c. **Financial performance**—covers financial planning and budgeting, financial accomplishment, financial control, current (financial) and viability index.
 - d. **Organisational discipline**—includes holding of elections, conflict resolution, imposition of membership disciplinary actions/sanctions, attendance in meetings and participation in group work.
2. **Additional indicators.** These are indicators for activities and functions beyond the usual irrigation-related responsibilities of an IA—e.g., cooperative activities, tie-up with GOs/NGOs, etc. These provide the basis for granting bonus points to IAs in recognition of their extra efforts to make the IAs viable and functional.

The AFS tool

The AFS tool is basically a list of items that need to be taken into account during performance evaluation with corresponding rating scales and percentage weights. The scores given (per criterion) are based on the results of interviews with IA officers, visits to the IA, inspection of IA records and reports and random interviews with IA members.

The list of indicators is presented in a matrix below. The detailed AFS form is available at IFAD Asia portal 'Resources' page.

Indicators	% Weight	Remarks
I. Irrigation and IA management-related		
A. Operation and maintenance	40	
1. O&M Planning		Evaluates whether the IA prepares plans (written or unwritten) with respect to cropping calendar, schedule of water delivery, CIS maintenance and repair and amortisation/ISF
2. O&M Implementation		Evaluates IA's adherence to and timeliness in implementing the IA plans
3. O&M Performance		Looks into IA's performance in terms of operating and maintaining CIS
B. Organisation	15	Looks into the regularity of the conduct of IA assemblies and meetings, membership of farmer beneficiaries in IA and efficiency in maintaining pertinent IA records
1. Membership		
2. Sectoral meeting		
3. BOD meeting		
4. General assembly/members' meeting		
5. Records/files		
C. Financial performance	30	Evaluates the IA's efficiency in managing their finances, specifically in the areas of planning and budgeting, accomplishment, control, current ratio and viability index
1. Financial plan		
2. Financial accomplishment		
3. Financial control		
4. Current ratio		
5. Viability index		
D. Organisational discipline	15	Evaluates the capacity to maintain order and control in the association, especially in motivating members to participate in activities in the IA (i.e., holding of elections, meetings and group work), conflict resolution and imposition of discipline/sanctions
1. Elections		
2. Conflict resolution		
3. Discipline/sanctions to members		
4. Attendance in BOD meetings		
5. Attendance in GA/members' meetings		
6. Attendance in sectoral meetings		
7. Involvement in group work		
Total	100	
II. Additional indicators	12	Ensures that the IA engages in activities or functions beyond the usual irrigation-related responsibilities to enhance viability and functionality (cooperative activities, tie-up with GOs/NGOs)
Highest possible ia rating	112	

Based on the final IA rating, which was agreed upon between NIA and IAs during consultation workshops, the descriptive ratings are set, as follows:

Descriptive rating	Range of ratings	IA Status/Remarks
Outstanding (O)	95% and above	The IA has effectively and efficiently managed their affairs. It can stand alone with minimal supervision from government. It has business ventures other than irrigation.
Very satisfactory (VS)	85 to 94%	The IA can manage their affairs with moderate supervision from government. Some of these IAs have small entrepreneurial activity.
Satisfactory (S)	75 to 84%	The IA implements plans and programmes with close supervision from the government. All IA activities are focused only on irrigation operation and maintenance.
Fair (F)	65 to 74%	The IA has written plans and programmes on irrigation-related activities, but some are yet to be implemented. It needs close monitoring and supervision from the government on capacity-building activities.
Poor (P)	Below 65%	The IA has no written plans and programmes on irrigation-related activities and on the affairs of their association. Close monitoring and supervision from the government are required in its capacity-building programme.

Lessons learned

To improve the accuracy and relevance of assessment results, the following recommendations should be considered:

- The timeline of the survey must be set in such a way that results could be fed back to the IAs in time for their preparation of their yearly plans and programmes.
- Adequate training on the use of and familiarisation with the AFS forms are essential. A dry run on how to conduct the AFS should be done.
- The sequence of items in the AFS Form 1 should be closely followed in administering the AFS to IAs. This will ensure that the all criteria are properly rated.
- Conduct the activity in an environment where farmer-respondents will neither be overwhelmed by the process nor intimidated by the presence of evaluators.



Conclusion

The AFS serves as a tool for project field implementers to decide what capacity-building interventions in managing irrigation-related activities are needed. AFS has proven to be effective in evaluating the impact of project interventions on irrigation beneficiaries.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AFS	annual functionality survey
AWPB	annual work plan and budget
BOT	Board of Trustees
CIS	communal irrigation system
GOs	Governmental organisations
IA	irrigator association
IDO	irrigators development officer
IDU	institutional development unit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMO	Irrigation Management Office
IRPEP	Irrigated Rice Production Enhancement Project
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
NIA	National Irrigation Administration
O&M	operation and maintenance
RaFPEP	Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme
RaSSFIP	Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project

Acknowledgement

Special thanks is given to all institutional development programme implementers and supervisors of NIA at the provincial, regional and national levels who enthusiastically conducted the AFS to all IAs monitored by NIA.

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M&E at the Microenterprise Level



In enterprise development projects, it is common practice to monitor beneficiaries collectively—i.e., recipients are tracked as a community and not individually. Monitoring usually focuses on the group or sector instead of on the individual. While this may be a rational approach, considering the cost implications of individually monitoring a project's beneficiaries, it does not provide an accurate basis for measuring the actual effects of the assistance provided by the project. Monitoring beneficiaries at the individual level gives project implementers a clearer picture of the changes happening in the lives of the people being assisted by the project. Moreover, validation of the impact of interventions on microenterprises (MEs) becomes easier because individual data on target beneficiaries are available.

This approach of monitoring beneficiaries at the microenterprise level was adopted by the Rural Micro Enterprise Promotion Programme (RuMEPP) throughout its area of coverage. The strategy provided the programme with information on the progress of each individual beneficiary for a certain period of time, which was useful for measuring implementation progress and facilitating the validation of outcomes.

Project description

The Rural Micro Enterprise Promotion Programme (RuMEPP) is a 7-year poverty alleviation project of the government of the Philippines that aims to reduce rural poverty by developing new and existing rural micro enterprises (MEs) that operate profitably and sustainably. RuMEPP is designed to attain greater impact on poverty alleviation and job creation using the two-pronged approach of providing both financial and technical assistance, including the promotion of policies supportive of the development and growth of MEs. While the supply of microfinance resources is essential in alleviating poverty, the programme will ensure that the provision of credit is maximised by providing business development services (BDS) to poor rural micro entrepreneurs. The provision of BDS will assist existing and potential micro entrepreneurs in realising the full potential of their enterprise investments through capacity building, product development, market linkages and policy advocacy.

RuMEPP has three components:

- a. Microfinance credit and support (MCS), which involves the provision of microfinance to rural MEs nationwide
- b. Micro Enterprise Promotion and Development (MEPD), which entails providing demand-responsive BDS to rural micro entrepreneurs primarily in the target 19 poor provinces in the poorest regions
- c. Programme Management and Policy Coordination (PMPC), which involves the setting up of a project implementation structure to ensure that target MEs benefit from a well-managed programme and give support to programme-specific policy dialogues at the national and local levels so that a policy/regulatory environment favorable to the development of microenterprises is created.

While the Programme's MCS component is implemented throughout the Philippines, the MEPD component primarily focuses on the 19 poor provinces in the country's five poorest regions, namely: Abra, Ifugao and Kalinga in the Cordillera Autonomous Region; Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon in the Bicol Region; Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar and Samar in the Eastern Visayas Region; Saranggani and South Cotabato in Region 12 and Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur in the CARAGA Region.

The 7-year programme began in 2007 and will end in 2013 with the following target deliverables: provision of credit to 35,000 MEs, provision of various BDS to 15,000 MEs and provision of both credit and BDS to 15,000 MEs.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the government unit mandated to develop the micro, small and medium enterprises sector, is the lead implementing agency of the programme. The Small Business Corporation, a government financing institution and an attached agency of DTI, will manage the MCS component, with the active participation of microfinance institutions (MFIs) as loan conduits. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) coordinates the implementation of all programme components, specifically the MEPD component, in collaboration with the regional and provincial offices of DTI within the programme area.

RuMEPP's microenterprise-level M&E System

Since RuMEPP intends to assist a definite number of rural microenterprises, it was important for the programme to be able to monitor them individually. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system at the microenterprise level allows implementers to keep track of developments happening in the business of each beneficiary over a specific period of time. Thus, RuMEPP developed an M&E system that will profile each recipient of programme assistance in every province covered. A standard profile form was provided by the programme. This would be accomplished by the micro entrepreneur beneficiary upon receiving initial assistance from RuMEPP. The profile form, which contains essential information about the microenterprise (e.g., business name, name and contact information of the entrepreneur, sales records, types of BDS received, source of credit), is updated every time the beneficiary receives assistance from the programme anew or whenever project staff conducts field visits. A software program was developed to establish a database of RuMEPP beneficiaries using the data from the individual microenterprise profiles.



Originally, the profile form used at the start of programme implementation was a seven-page document, which was a modified version of the business profile management system (BPMS) form used for small and medium enterprises by the Department of Trade and Industry. Since the BPMS form contained many fields which were not yet relevant to the operations of microenterprises, certain sections that were applicable to RuMEPP beneficiaries were added to the document. However, in the initial roll-out of profiling the RuMEPP beneficiaries, project staff from the field found the form too complicated to handle. Even the micro entrepreneurs expressed apprehension in completing the form, saying that it was too hard for them to fill in a seven-page document when only several items were relevant to their enterprise. Further, project implementers experienced technical problems with the software, particularly in encoding the profiles and in generating reports.



To address this concern, the programme developed a simplified individual profile form (one page) which only requested information that was pertinent to the operations of rural microenterprises. Microsoft Excel was also used for the new form instead of the software previously developed because it was simpler and more user-friendly. Report generation and data management became much easier since Microsoft Excel has features for data encoding, extraction and expansion, which are not too complicated. More importantly, the shift to Microsoft Excel increased access to the database of RuMEPP beneficiaries as the files were easily shared by implementers and even other stakeholders through the internet.

Individual profiling form

Form 6 – Individual Microenterprise profile sheet								
(to be updated on a monthly basis for applicable indicators exhibiting change)								
Microenterprises identification number								
Name of microenterprise								
Name of proprietor / owner								
Business address								
Contact number(s)								
Business activity (please check)	Production/Processing () Trading () Services ()							
Date established								
Performance parameter	2010				2011			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
I. Business registration a. Registered? (YES or NO) b. If yes, with which agency? c. Date of registration/renewal								
II. Type(s) of BDS received								
a. Management trainings								
b. Skills training								
c. Product development								
d. Marketing assistance								
e. Others (Please specify)								
III. Measures of business activity								
a. Total sales Volume (in units of measure) Value (in PhP)								
b. Gross profit (in PhP)								
c. Net income (in PhP)								
IV. Business asset size								
V. Market(s) for products/services								
VI. No. of workers employed a.1. Part-time MALE a.2. Part-time FEMALE b.1. Full-time MALE b.2. Full-time FEMALE								
VII. Credit availment status a. Name of MFI b. Amount of loan c. Status of loan								

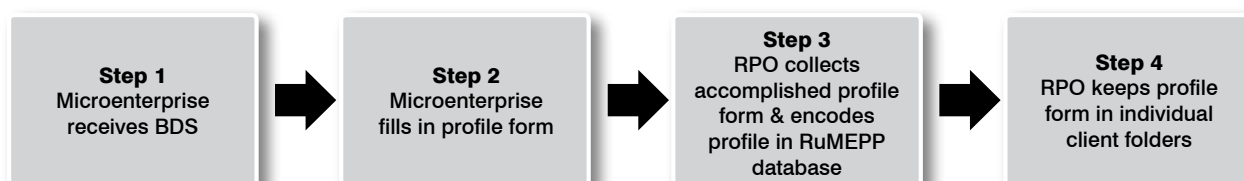


Figure 1. Steps in the Profiling process.

Challenges in using the new system

While the new system was successful in establishing the database of RuMEPP beneficiaries, the issue of having the individual profiles regularly updated emerged as an urgent concern. With RuMEPP-assisted microenterprises numbering in the thousands, updating their individual profiles constituted a great challenge to programme implementers. Generating updates on the status of each microenterprise in terms of sales, employment and other aspects of their operations would definitely require time and would have cost implications.

Another issue identified in using the new profiling system was the low appreciation for the data generated and made available by the database. Although the number of RuMEPP beneficiaries was successfully determined and properly documented, the new profiling system only showed a consolidation of all the individual profiles of the microenterprise assisted in each province. Other useful information, which may be sourced from the database remained unused by the programme.



Actions taken

To address the need for an effective monitoring of RuMEPP beneficiaries without exceeding budgetary allocations, the following strategies were undertaken in updating the individual profiles of assisted microenterprise:

Option 1

Whenever trainings or other BDS activities are conducted in a particular area, the micro entrepreneur-participants are requested to provide updates on their individual profiles. The updated profiles are then collected after the said activity by each RuMEPP provincial officer (RPO) in the 19 provinces. The updated versions of the profiles are consolidated by the RPOs and sent to the Programme Management Unit (PMU).

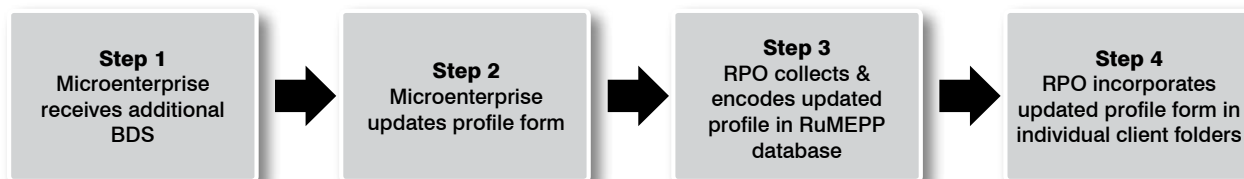


Figure 2. Profiling process for option 1.

Option 2

During cluster meetings of microfinance institution (MFI) borrowers or assemblies of microenterprise associations in a specific area, attendees who are also RuMEPP beneficiaries are requested to update their individual profile sheets. As in the first strategy, the updated profiles are collected and submitted to the RPO assigned in the area. The updated versions of the profiles are likewise consolidated by the RPOs and sent to the PMU.



Figure 3. Profiling process for option 2.

Option 3

For beneficiaries who are not currently participating in any BDS activity or have no affiliation with an MFI/association of microenterprise, the RPO conducts individual site visits to update their profiles. This option is only used in cases when the first two choices are not applicable.



Figure 4. Profiling process for option 3.

On the issue of further utilising and maximising the available data, the PMU makes modifications to the Excel-based profiles and re-formats the sheets to include formulas that would generate relevant statistical reports useful for RuMEPP implementers. Among the information provided by the modified system were the total number of beneficiaries per year, distribution of microenterprise assisted per municipality, sex disaggregation of beneficiaries, level of business registration and number of beneficiaries who have availed of both credit and BDS.

Table 1. Sample statistical report.

Province of Sarangani							
By Year	No. of MEs	By loan	No. of MEs	By municipality	No. of MEs	By employment	No. of MEs
2008	120	With loan	735	Alabel	442	Part-time	515
2009	265	Without loan	873	Glan	188	Full-time	201
2010	377	Total	1,608	Malapatan	336	Total	716
2011	410	By track		Malungon	179	By municipality	
2012	436	Track 1 Credit before BDS	712	Maitum	154	Production / Processing	611
Total	1,608			Kiamba	186		
By gender		Track 2 BDS before credit	23	Maasim	123		
Male	241	Total	735	Total	1,608	Trading	789
Female	1,367					Services	208
Total	1,608					Total	1,608

Results

The adjustments made by RuMEPP on the profiling of assisted microenterprises were important factors in the successful monitoring of its beneficiaries at the microenterprise level. The approach of using person-focused monitoring was essential in establishing a reliable database that provides vital information for the Programme's M&E system. The individual profiling system used by RuMEPP not only ensured that each reported recipient of programme assistance was documented and well accounted for. This is the first time that such individual tracking of microenterprise beneficiaries, one that includes detailed monitoring of business activities, has been done in an enterprise development project in the Philippines.



The system of monitoring at the microenterprise level also helped identify and measure certain changes happening in the microenterprises of the beneficiaries. This facilitated the validation of outputs and specific interim outcomes in the field, which was critical in assessing programme performance. However, the system (in Microsoft Excel) needs to be further enhanced to capture other significant changes experienced by the beneficiaries as a result of programme interventions. The gains from using the microenterprise-level M&E have prompted DTI to adopt the system in its initiative to scale up RuMEPP in other provinces in the country.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BDS	business development services
BPMS	business profile management system
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
MCS	micro finance credit and support
ME	microenterprise
MEPD	microenterprise promotion and development
MFI	micro finance institution
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PMPC	Programme Management and Policy Coordination
PMU	Programme Management Unit
RPO	RuMEPP provincial officer
RuMEPP	Rural Micro Enterprise Promotion Programme

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Participatory Tools for Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Participatory Impact Assessment



The IFAD-funded Rural Income Diversification Project (RIDP) was implemented in 66 of the poorest communes in five districts of Tuyen Quang Province in Viet Nam. Active from 2002 to 2009, the project dealt with 13 main topics (micro-enterprise development, forest land management, vocational training, animal health and others). During its implementation, the project set up a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that focused primarily on quantitative monitoring. To be able to assess the project at different stages, it was necessary to develop monitoring tools that could also generate qualitative data. It was thought that an analysis based on both types of data gathering can provide a better picture of project impact.

The participatory impact assessment (PIA) of the project was integrated into the M&E system as a supplementary tool to provide qualitative impact information on an annual basis. Data were also collected to compare and assess changes collected at the beginning of the project using participatory project appraisal tools.

Participatory impact assessment

PIA is used to ensure greater involvement of beneficiaries in impact assessment. The exercise seeks to lend support to the main objective of the PIA, which is to assess implementation progress and the efficacy of local planning processes, beneficiary participation, gender mainstreaming, income diversification, empowerment, community capacity building, socioeconomic development, environmental protection, overall impact on hunger eradication and poverty alleviation, etc. The PIA was conducted each year before July to ensure that PIA results were used in the preparation of the annual work plan and budget (AWPB). Carrying out random checks in the field was one of the main functions of project management staff at the district and provincial levels. The project activities were then adjusted in accordance with the identified key issues. The community organisers and district facilitators provided support.

Implementation steps and assessment method

Step 1: Sampling

Sampling was carried out randomly in two steps: selection of the commune, followed by the selection of two villages within each commune. The sampling ensures that representative examples of the conditions in agriculture, the economy, the society and the environment are collected for each surveyed commune. The annual PIA sample survey was conducted after the first year of project implementation (e.g., communes that joined the project in 2003 conducted their PIA in 2004).

Step 2: Training of participating staff

Training of trainers was done at district and provincial levels. The international M&E consultant conducted a 4-day training course (1 day for theory, 2 days for practice in two villages, and 1 day for documenting experiences and finalising formats and tools). The trainers who participated in the training course at provincial and district levels provided training on methods and tools for impact assessment at district levels to the Commune Development Board (CDB) staff, village heads, chairwomen of village women's unions and extension workers. Training session in each commune lasted for 4 days (1.5 day for theory, 2 days for practice runs in two villages; 0.5 day for documenting experiences and agreeing on the PIA plan). The local trainers conducted impact assessments in the selected villages.

Step 3: Assessment method

The District Project Coordination Unit (DPCU) prepared the plan for conducting the assessments and informed the selected communes, villages and households. Village stakeholders used PIA formats to rate the impact of activities (from 1-10).

Mark	Level
1-2	Negligible or little effect
3-4	Little effect
5-7	Significant or large effect
8-9	Very large effect
10	100% effect

Step 4. Conduct assessment

With the support of the provincial staff, district staff and implementing agencies, the CDB held a meeting for the village-level assessments. At a public meeting, each village nominated a group of 16 people who will participate in the rating exercise. The group was required to include 8 women and at least 8 persons who were considered poor. A village meeting was then conducted to discuss the overall assessment and the completion of the questionnaires and rating sheets. These were then submitted to the DPCU for consolidation. The consolidation sheets prepared by the DPCU were then submitted to the Provincial Project Coordination Unit (PPCU) for preparation of the final consolidated report.

Step 5. Processing of assessment results

The annual impact assessment exercise provided early annual information on the impact of the project in the communities. Results indicated that the project had a favourable impact on communities and beneficiaries. On the other hand, the negative results (i.e., no positive improvement in the lives of the beneficiaries) highlighted areas for improvement and the lessons learned from implementation shortcomings. For example, the project might have to review its activities, processes and approaches at the grassroots level in order to improve collaboration with line agencies and local authorities.



Step 6. Data entry and reporting

The M&E staff of DPCU entered and analysed the data in MS Excel. The DPCU sent the data to PPCU, which compiled and drafted the final report. The draft of the final report was sent back to the DPCU for comments, which were then incorporated in the final report to be submitted to IFAD by PPCU.

Innovative features and limitations of the tool

Innovative feature	Limitation
Communities and poor farmers are empowered to assess and suggest improvements to project activities	Lack of outside party participation may make results very subjective
Project staff and representatives of implementing agency only play the role of facilitators; beneficiaries have the final say in the assessment	District-level staff trainers have varied experiences and skills in training; not all community-level participants may receive adequate training
Deals with both positive and negative aspects according to communities and villagers	Villagers who play an important role in the village could dominate the discussion, crowding out the opinions of others, especially the poor
Participation of women and poor farmers secured and considered important	No control groups are used.

The implementation of the annual PIA helped the RIDP assess the impact of the project on the beneficiaries and village/communities in terms of key aspects such as food security, diversification of income sources, capacity building, empowerment of communities and environmental impact.

Currently, the Tuyen Quang Tam Nong Support Project continues to use the PIA method to perform annual assessments.

However, some adjustments need to be made to overcome the limitations of the PIA method:

- The rating scale needs to be shortened from 1-10 to 1-6.
- The evaluation process should be carried out with participation of groups outside the project.
- Sample size selection needs to be improved and a control group should be introduced to ensure proper assessment of impact.



Lessons learned

For the assessment results to accurately reflect project impact, these main factors should be considered:

- Questionnaires need to be checked by multiple stakeholders before being used in the field. Also, interviewers at the training course should discuss their experiences after the pilot assessment is done in the field.
- The survey should be conducted before next year's planning cycle and at a time when the participating beneficiaries are not burdened by other activities (e.g., harvest time).
- After collecting feedback, a random check of the answers should be carried out to ensure accuracy.
- The role and skills of the interviewers and investigators are very important. Adequate training in both theory and practice should be provided to the staff.

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Report on impact assessment of the project RIDP 2007

Acronyms and abbreviations

AWPB	annual work plan and budget
CDB	Commune Development Board
DPCU	District Project Coordination Unit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PIA	participatory impact assessment

PPCU	Provincial Project Coordination Unit
RIDP	Rural Income Diversification Project

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Participatory Peer Review Technique



The West Guangxi Poverty Alleviation Program (WGPAP) is a joint initiative of IFAD and the Chinese government, undertaken in ten impoverished counties in the Guangxi province, China. The project aims to address diverse issues, from infrastructure construction to capacity building. It provides technical trainings to rural vulnerable groups like women and poverty-stricken smallholders. The Guangxi Administration Center of Foreign Funded Projects for Agriculture (the Center) was appointed by the Chinese government as the implementation partner of WGPAP.



During the implementation of WGPAP, it was agreed that the involvement of field stakeholders is vital to ensure sustainable impacts of the project. After examining various methods for engaging the local population, the participatory peer-review technique (PPRT) was selected as the method for involving field stakeholders in project implementation as well as for improving quality control/learning processes. Because of positive experiences with the use of PPRT, its application was extended to the second phase of WGPAP: the Guangxi Integrated Agriculture Development Project (GIADP). Furthermore, the approach had some impact on the knowledge management level of implementing partners. The Center also introduced and integrated PPRT into other projects requiring careful monitoring and evaluation (M&E) with local stakeholder engagement, for example, the World Bank-funded Red Soil project.

What is PPRT

The PPRT method, developed by the Center, is derived from accumulated experiences gathered in the course of implementation of international projects. The development of the tool benefited from valuable inputs from experts of international organisations, including IFAD and the World Bank, (see Figure 1 for key steps of the PPRT).

One to three participants from each county are selected to visit and rate the performance of the project in other counties. The evaluators are usually experienced practitioners and are familiar with project management and M&E. Before being assigned to their designated counties, they are trained on the application and use of the PPRT rating forms, with indicators appropriate to project components. It also includes standards of rating that could be further revised after the field visits are completed.

The task of evaluators during field visits is to assess various aspects of project implementation, following a pre-set questionnaire. Some of the topics that are covered include quantity of project outputs and investment amounts, project bidding procedures and a review of balance funding. Upon their return from the field, the teams gather again under the coordination of the Provincial Project Management Office (PPMO). They compare data from the different counties and identify high-performing and low-performing project areas. PPMO team leaders, in consultation with external experts, summarise results and produce an overall score for each county. The score given to each county will be considered when allocating the annual work plan and budget (AWPB) and resources among the counties.



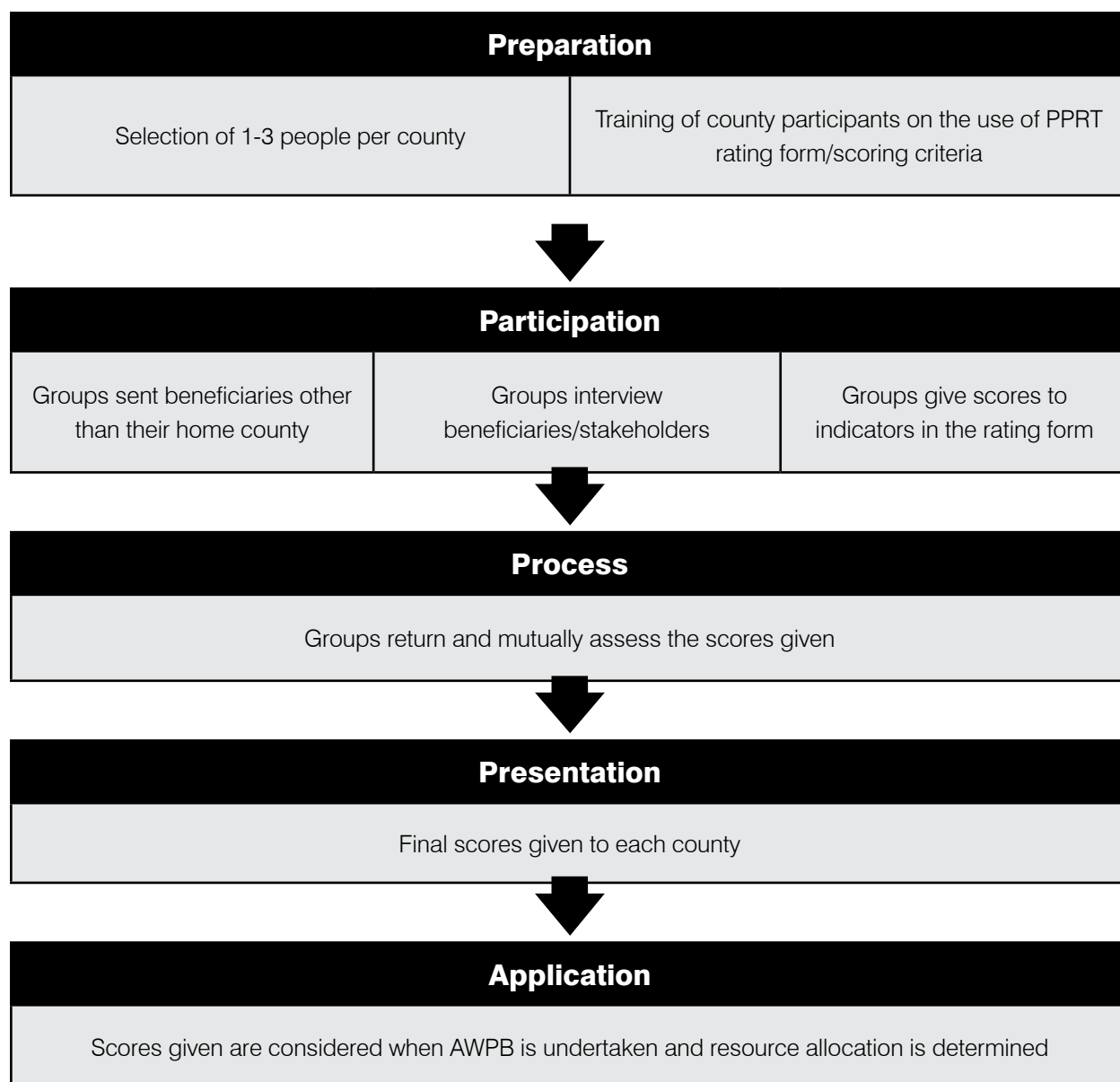


Figure 1. Key steps of PPRT.

PPRT vs. conventional M&E

Compared with conventional top-down M&E approaches, (see Table 1), PPRT does not require highly skilled M&E evaluators and implementation costs are lower. The communication of findings to a broader audience is enhanced.



Table 1. Advantages of PPRT over conventional review methods.

Category	Conventional review	PPRT
Review Location	Project site	Project site
Reviewer	Expert from IFAD or PPMO	Project implementer
Review orientation	Vertical	Horizontal
Level of expertise required	In depth	Low
Control	High	Low
Communication capacity	Weak	Strong
Review cost	High	Low
Authenticity of information	Low to medium	Medium to high

Lessons learned from PPRT

Involving more project beneficiaries in a participatory process has been a challenge. This is often particularly difficult when there is a large number of beneficiary households involved. The large number of beneficiary households, their wide distribution across the project area and limited human and financial resources pose a substantial challenge for the evaluation.

By sharing the findings across evaluator teams engaging them in a discussion around the various PPRT provides a platform for learning and communication between project stakeholders and beneficiaries from different counties. This ultimately enhances the opportunity to better capture, compile and disseminate the knowledge and information derived from the project. Compared with conventional M&E, it is cheaper to implement and does not require a long turnaround period before the data can be analysed and findings are derived. This versatility makes it suitable for repeated use throughout the project implementation cycle, which makes it an important periodic monitoring tool.



Acronyms and abbreviations

AWPB	annual work plan and budget
GIADP	Guangxi Integrated Agriculture Development Project
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PPMO	Provincial Project Management Office
PPRT	participatory peer review technique
WGPAP	West Guangxi Poverty Alleviation Project

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to the following partners who made commitments to develop and apply of the PPRT tool:

- Guangxi Department of Agriculture
- Guangxi Department of Finance
- Guangxi Branch of the State Council Leading Group Office for Poverty Alleviation and Development
- Guangxi Administration Center of Foreign Funded Project for Agriculture
- Project County Governments

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Piloting Community Perspective Planning



The IFAD-funded North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) for the Upland Areas was implemented by the Department of the North Eastern Region (DoNER), Government of India. It covered six districts in three provinces of northeast India. Between 1999 and until 2008, it covered a total of 39,161 households directly and another 234,966 households indirectly. The project worked with 50 partner NGOs, 1,012 natural resource management groups (NaRM-Gs) and 3,168 self-help groups in 869 villages. The overall objective of NERCORMP was to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups through improved management of their resource base in a way that contributes to the preservation and restoration of the environment.

Community perspective planning—the ‘what’ and the ‘why’

After using participatory rural appraisal methods during the initial years of the project, the project staff were challenged by the need to develop a community-based planning methodology that would a) allow communities to participate in the planning process; b) help communities to jointly take stock of the resources available to them locally and appreciate the value of these community resources for improving their livelihoods and c) use a medium-term perspective of 5 to 8 years to plan their development within and outside the scope of the project. It was the first such project being implemented in the area and there was no experience in the region to learn from. Five members of the Project Management Unit went to a village in Senapati District of Manipur in northeast India to test and develop this methodology, along with non-governmental organisation (NGO) staff and community members. After working with community members in the mountain village in Senapati for 4 days, the initial building blocks of a diagnostic tool (thereafter referred to as community perspective planning) were put in place.

The community perspective planning methodology is a diagnostic tool that includes a set of participatory exercises for assessing available resources and capacities at the community level leading to a perspective plan. This will enable the implementation of annual work plans and the monitoring and evaluation of implementation performance and results. The activity is undertaken jointly by the members of the community and project staff.

Steps in the Process

The steps followed in perspective planning and monitoring are as follows:

Step 1: A perspective plan is drafted on the basis of information derived from the PRA exercise. This exercise is critical for mobilising groups for livelihood development.

Step 2: A community meeting is held with all the households in attendance. The purpose, benefit and the meaning of the exercise are explained here.

Step 3: A vision-building exercise is done to identify the long-term goals and aspirations of community members (with respect to their families and the village as a whole).

Step 4: Community based organisations identify various positive and negative changes as a result of project interventions.

Step 5: Participants are then guided in the identification of short-, medium- and long-term goals on the basis of which a pathway is mapped.

Step 6: Corresponding activities are identified for each goal. These are usually a combination of activities that will be supported by the project with others being supported through government programmes.

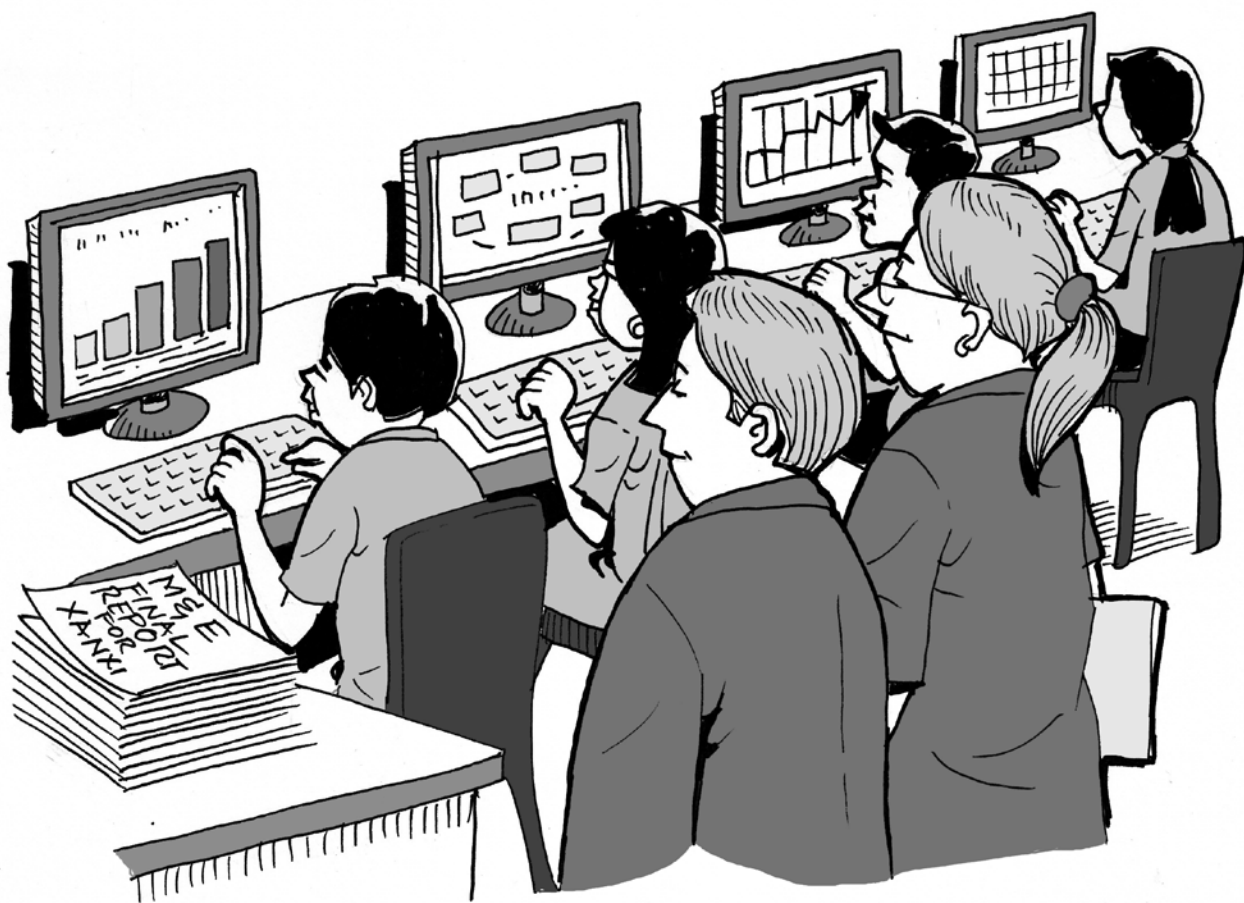
Step 7: Activities are then sequenced over a timeline ranging from 5 to 7 years to about 10 years; participants are reminded that beyond 10 years might be unrealistic.

Step 8: Groups are assisted in identifying resources within the village as well as resources from the project and other government agencies. Unit costs of project inputs are identified jointly for the preparation of the annual work plan and budget.

Monitoring and joint review of the perspective plan

When the perspective plan is completed, the project staff assist the communities in setting up a participatory monitoring plan. This entails first preparing an annual work plan based on the perspective plan. The Perspective plan is referred to every year before the village annual work plan is prepared.

The participants then select indicators for monitoring in a meeting during which project logframe indicators are also shared. The sources of data collection and data recording tools (including the time of collection for each indicator) are identified jointly with the community. Furthermore, people who can collect data and also organise joint reflection workshops are identified. These forums enable data analysis to determine collective action.



Implementing the perspective plan

The above process begins with organising a meeting in the village with all primary stakeholders. In this meeting, the project staff/NGO staff/facilitator explains what the project goal and objectives are. Thereafter, the facilitator explains the rationale of the project and discusses the problem tree to remind people of the cause and solutions to problems on the basis of which the project was designed. Next, the staff organises a discussion on the scope of the project, explaining what activities the project can support to address their needs and what is beyond the scope of the project. Each component is explained in terms of the activities and the results chain. Once this exercise is over, the project staff formally seeks inputs from all community members and obtains their consent in implementing the project. This leads to a social agreement between the project staff and the respective village community.

The involvement of the community institutions play a crucial role during the initial stages of implementing the plan. In this project, the NaRM-G, a village-level institution that comprises one male and one female member from each household is involved. This group of people addresses issues on village-level development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These community institutions have been rated very high by supervision mission and reviews. These groups have 'gainfully addressed issues of village development planning and implementation and successfully brought into their fold the participation of women in decisionmaking at the village level, besides bringing about new orientation and sensitisation to the traditional village institutions/authorities towards community development'.

Vision building is an important element. It is often a dream or a long-term perception of a person or a group of people about their life and about their community. In this exercise, a group of people is asked how they would like to see their village after 10 years. After an hour the group members usually come up with a list of things they would like to do, see, and have in the village. On the basis of these, they are also asked to find out what are the things community members will have to do as individuals and as a group to achieve their goals. This exercise is used for planning and for preparing a participatory perspective plan.

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises were undertaken for purposes of appraisal and assessment of community resources and for determining what opportunities there are to manage these resources. PRAs are used to prepare plans to undertake livelihood activities. (Handbooks and guides describe these methods in detail.) The purposes of using the tools are briefly explained:

Social mapping is a PRA tool to help understand the village in terms of its location, dwellings and type of infrastructure such as roads, waterways, source of drinking water, schools, community halls, religious building, population and settlement patterns. This was extensively used in NERCORMP for community mobilisation.

Wealth ranking processes are used to categorise households into wealth categories in order to prepare a poverty profile of the village. This is a participatory exercise whereby villagers are assisted to develop criteria for different categories of people. After a thorough discussion, the community decides on the allocation of households for each category, thus creating four groups: rich, middle, poor and poorest. A number of partner NGOs in NERCORMP were already well versed with this methodology. Of these, the BOSCO Reach Out had the most comprehensive methodology. A consensus was made to use wealth ranking in NERCORMP.

Resource maps are of several types. Normally, the first resource map drawn in the village is one related to natural resources. For example, it begins by identifying various village resources such as water resources, forests, arable land, marginal land, etc. More detail is then provided by identifying specific resources available within a major resource category (e.g., in the forest, various commercial or useful trees are identified). Land resource capability maps are then drawn; different lands are classified in terms of soil type and its fertility for agricultural production. In addition to these maps, gender resource mapping is also done: here, the total resources in the village are identified and mapped in terms of involvement, control, responsibility and labour of men and women. The resource inflows and outflows from the villages are similarly mapped.

The mini household surveys supplement the resource-mapping exercise. They generate household information of a village in terms of population pattern, human resource availability, distribution of resources within the communities and household income and expenditure.

The watershed maps are quite similar to that of a resource map where forest and waterways are identified. These maps show the area of a village that falls within a particular watershed. Maps developed by a soil and water conservation department or an agriculture department can be used to compare maps. These maps are used for participatory planning, along with government agencies of soil and water conservation measures. Such maps show bunds, weirs, embankments, waterways, or where contour hedgerows are required for soil and water conservation or erosion control. They are useful tools for mobilising of groups to manage natural resources within the territory of a village. NERCORMP later substituted this with the 3D modeling maps.

The seasonal activity calendar is prepared by community members to show what activities are undertaken at different periods throughout the year. It starts by indicating the weather, such as the months when the rain occurs and the months when there is a dry spell. One can also plot the production of food, availability of food, seasonal price of a cash crop in the market, labour demand in the market, grazing time of animals in the pasture, harvesting times, human and animal diseases as well as occurrence of natural calamities such as floods and droughts.

The Venn diagram is a diagram that shows institutional relationships within as well as outside the village. The diagram consists of circles of different sizes, each representing an institution or an organisation. The size of the circle represents/illustrates the importance of one organisation in relation to another, whereas the distance represents the accessibility of an organisation in relation to the other.

Mobility maps put emphasis on mobility, an important factor in remote villages. The amount of time taken for men and women to travel and person-days usually traveled per week are calculated for a specific activity. This will include, for example, the time required to go to the local market, to the nearest district town, to fetch water or to collect firewood from the forest.

The transect walk is a tool used side-by-side with resource mapping. The purpose of a transect walk is to observe and record information from a village. NGO and line agency staff, along with community members, start the transect walk from one end of the village to the other. During the walk, the micro agroecological zones are identified, including soil types, crops, livestock, forest and pasture and traditional new technologies are recorded. At various sections of the terrain, the team discusses problems, solutions and opportunities.

After the PRAs were done, a livelihood promotion strategy is developed. This involves mobilisation of the village community members and community-based organisations. Each member of the activity groups and self-help groups established by the project are assisted in their efforts to identify priority livelihoods with potential to generate income within 6 months to 1 year from farm-based activities. The development of capacities and assets needed to support such activities is discussed.

As the first set of these activities are put into place, the community members can meet their requirements for food production and purchase of food from the sale of surplus from farm-based production. After this, the next set of activities are identified to be put in place/implemented. The community then plans to take up short-gestation (3 to 4 years) livelihood activities. Members who have very little access to land plan activities related to livestock and non-farm enterprises. The older self-help groups and activity groups plan higher investment activities such as non-farm enterprises (e.g., management of value addition units such as packaging, processing and milling plants) as well as off-farm enterprises (e.g., convenience stores, petty shops and transportation business, etc.). This strategy is perceived as an essential part of a systematic process of mobilisation prior to activity implementation.

Results from NERCORMP

Table 1. Model outputs produced by NERCORMP

Major component	Physical achievement
1. Training for capacity building	15,158.00 Nos
2. Agriculture/horticulture	11,138.54 ha
3. Spices	2,173.78 ha
4. Plantation	2,716.37 ha
5. Medicinal and aromatic plants	1,641.34 ha
6. Non-timber forest products	742.91 ha
7. Livestock, fishery, sericulture and vermi composting	860 villages covering 39,161 households
8. Biodiversity and forest conservation	1,835.89 sq km
9. Social sector and infrastructure	

Major component	Physical achievement
a. Low-cost latrines	29,459 units
b. Gravity pipe water supply	368 installations
c. Water tank	613 units
d. Spring-tapped chamber	385 units
e. School building	75 units
f. Road construction	1,236.10 km
g. Bridges/culverts	277
h. Electrification	50 villages covered
i. Terrace development (wet & dry terrace)	1,557.39 ha
10. Non-farm enterprises	6184 numbers

The project completion report of NERCORMP also lists the following changes brought about by the outputs shown in Table 1:

- Low-cost latrines have brought about improvement in sanitation practices.
- Causeways (submersible bridges) have provided better connectivity, especially during the monsoon season.
- Vermi-compost units/pits have contributed to increased productivity.
- Biomass power plants have helped provide rural electrification.
- Planting of perennial crops in jhum fallow land has reduced the areas under jhum cultivation. It had a positive impact on the environment.
- Spring-tapped chambers have increased the discharge of water and improved access to clean water.
- Agroforestry models have conserved moisture, helped control soil erosion and improved productivity in a sustainable manner.
- Herbal gardens have contributed to better health care.
- Protection of water catchment areas has resulted in communities deciding to frame rules and regulations.
- A restored environment has resulted in an increase in non-timber forest products and wildlife.

Even as the project completion report was being written, the government of India was already making plans to scale out the project to a larger number of villages.

Conclusion

The community perspective plan helps address community development goals that can be achieved through both the project and the identified government schemes and programmes, which otherwise go unnoticed by village communities. This methodology helps men and women identify different activities to achieve the same social and economic development milestones and goals that would benefit their families and their community. Most importantly, it helps to consistently plan activities and targets each year, aligned with the milestones and goals sequenced along a timeline of 5 to 10 years.

Lessons learned

- The perspective planning process brought women to the forefront of development. Although the goals and milestones of women are the same, the means and activities to achieve these milestones and goals are different for women and men. This enriches the quality of the annual work plans and budgets and village plans.
- Re-visioning and revisiting of perspective plans from time to time with a view to introduce changes as required are important.
- Joint reflection workshops organised quarterly at every level of the project improves project execution.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BOSCO	Don Bosco Industrial Training Institute under St. Anthony's School
CRMS	Community Resource Management Society
DONER	Department of North Eastern Region
NaRM-Gs	natural resources management groups

NERCORMP North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project

NGO non-governmental organisation

Bio-sketch and contact details

Shaheel Rafique, was born in Assam, India. He earned his graduate degree in agriculture, specialising in Tea Technology and a PhD in agricultural economics from the University of Reading. His interest is in rural economic development and specialises in monitoring and evaluation and project management. He contributed to the setting up of RIMS and annual outcome monitoring and impact evaluation systems with contemporary methods in 10 projects under the IFAD India Country Programme. He worked for IFAD in the India Country Office before becoming a consultant in Asia and Southeast Asia.

Measuring the Organisational Maturity of Self-Help Groups



To measure changes in the situation of poor households, the Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP) in the Philippines developed a participatory assessment tool to measure the organisational maturity of self-help groups (SHG). The self-help group assessment tool is called SIHAGA.

Under the context of the NMCIREMP, the SHG is an affiliation of target beneficiaries whose membership ranges from 15 to 20 households. The SHGs were managing poverty alleviation fund sub-projects under two components of the Project.

The SIHAGA tool was used by 780 self-help groups (96% of the total number of SHGs assisted by the Project from 2005 to 2009) in assessing their level of organisational maturity. The participatory assessments were conducted on an annual basis with participation of members of the community.

The Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP) 577-PH was an IFAD–assisted poverty alleviation project implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform from 2003 to 2009 in northern Mindanao, Philippines.

The project has six components: Community Institutions and Participatory Development, Natural Resource Management, Community Investments, Support Services and Studies, Support to Indigenous Peoples, and Project Management. The Project's beneficiaries were 58,000 poor households of agrarian reform beneficiaries, indigenous peoples, upland farmers and fisher folks. Fifty-eight percent of the beneficiaries were women.

The SIHAGA assessment tool

The SIHAGA assessment tool measures the organisational maturity of a self-help group by evaluating three major parameters organisational, financial and managerial.

(i) Organisational – refers to membership structure, group activities and participation of members, economic status of members, purpose, programme and undertakings. The weight assigned to this parameter is 75% because organisational strengthening entails the conduct of many activities.

The eight organisational parameter indicators

1. Size of SHG – refers to the number of members; this could range from 15 to 20
2. Constitution – refers to the rules and regulations or group policies, degree of members' compliance, accessibility by members to documents and imposition of sanctions
3. Economic status of members – refers to the segment to which the members belong (poor, middle class or elite)
4. Meetings – refers to the frequency of meetings held by the SHG (monthly, quarterly or annually)
5. Attendance of members in meetings – refers to the number (or percentage) of members attending meetings;
6. Participation of members in decisionmaking – refers to the degree of participation of members and the degree of interventions
7. Sharing of responsibilities – refers to the regularity of rotation of members in performing tasks related to organisational management, record keeping, cash handling, accounting and committee memberships. In this sub-aspect, participation by gender is also measured
8. Common action program – this refers to the purpose for which members formed the SHG as it relates to community development

(ii) Financial – refers to the aspects of financial management. The sub-aspects being measured are amount of savings, amount of loans availed of by members, resource mobilisation, rotation of common funds, method of cash handling and rate of repayment. The weight assigned to this parameter is 20% and this is borne by the fact that SHGs, as informal groups are not expected to have installed standard financial systems like those used by formal entities such as registered cooperatives.

The six financial parameter indicators

1. Savings – refers to the number of members with savings, regularity of savings and minimum amount of savings
2. Loans – refers to the number of members who avail of loans, amount of loan, purpose of loan and policies governing loan releases
3. Rotation of common funds – refers to the degree of utilisation of funds generated by members and the purpose for which the funds are used
4. Repayment – refers to the rate of repayment of loans by members and the sanctions/penalties imposed on overdue accounts
5. Cash handling – refers to the method of handling cash, who handles the cash and what are the policies related to cash handling
6. Resource mobilisation – refers to the schemes used by the SHG to generate resources. These can be internal or external (savings, capital build up or fund sourcing)

(iii) Managerial – refers to the system of maintaining records, degree of members' awareness in systematic record keeping, attendance in management and technical training, and audit system. The weight assigned to this parameter is 5%.

The four managerial parameter indicators

1. Maintenance of records – refers to the maintenance of organisational and financial records and the type of records maintained, degree of members' consciousness about the importance of record keeping and degree of involvement of members in record keeping
2. Training in all modules – refers to the degree of participation and attendance of members in training programs
3. Credit plus – refers to plans and programme of the SHG that go beyond providing loan assistance to members
4. External audit – refers to the conduct of an audit by an external group and the frequency of conducting the audit to ensure transparency in financial transactions and accountability

Methodologies

Participatory SHG assessment

1. The assessment is done by administering the SHG assessment questionnaire during a focus group discussion. It is undertaken at year-end. Assessment results are used as inputs for the ensuing year's SHG and project planning exercises.
2. The SHG members' responses are recorded by encircling the appropriate letter from among a list of choices under each question in the tool. Responses are validated by cross-checking available documents presented by the group as proof.
3. Questions presented in italics are probe questions and not rated. However, responses are recorded by encircling the corresponding letters. These questions bring out the data needed in the narrative report.
4. The underlying reasons, ideas raised, suggestions made and conditions presented are recorded under the remarks column of the questionnaire.

Data processing and giving feedback at the SHG level

1. The data collected using the SIHAGA questionnaire are processed using an assessment score sheet.

SHG assessment score sheet

Score	Rating	Adjectival rating
1 to 1.7	60 to 69	Very poor
1.8 to 2.5	68 to 75	Poor
2.6 to 3.2	76 to 82	Average
3.4 to 4	84 to 90	Good

Table 1. Rating scale for measuring SHG maturity.

Adjectival rating	Equivalent Maturity Level	Description
Good	Level 4	High level of maturity; capable enough to manage development initiatives
Average	Level 3	Medium level of maturity; capable of managing development initiatives with less degree of interventions from outside sources
Poor	Level 2	Low level of maturity; needs interventions in organisational capacity building
Very Poor	Level 1	Very low level of maturity; needs more intensive interventions

Table 2. Sample assessment output in matrix form.

Shg assessment score Sheet Name of SHG Makugihon Sitio Dagangdang, Colorado, Jabonga, Location Agusan del Norte August 16, 2005 Date assessed					
Parameter	% Weight	Adjectival rating and corresponding score			
		Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Organisational	75%				
1. Size of SHG		4			
2. Constitution		3.8			
3. Economic status of members		4			
4. Meetings		4			
5. Attendance of members in meetings			3		
6. Participation of members in decisionmaking		4			
7. Sharing of responsibilities				2.5	
8. Common action programs			3		
Subtotal		19.8	6	2.5	0
Total		28.3			
Weighted total		3.54			
Weighted score		2.7			
Financial	20%				
9. Savings			3		
10. Loans				2.3	
11. Rotation of common fund		4			
12. Repayment		4			
13. Cash handling		4			
14. Resource mobilisation				2	
Subtotal		12	3	4.3	0
Total		19.33			
Weighted total		3.22			
Weighted score		0.6			
Managerial	5%				
15. Maintenance of records				2.5	
16. Training in all modules				2.5	
17. Credit plus				2	
18. External audits					1

Shg assessment score Sheet Name of SHG Location Date assessed					
Makugihon Sitio Dagangdang, Colorado, Jabonga, Agusan del Norte August 16, 2005					
Parameter	% Weight	Adjectival rating and corresponding score			
		Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Subtotal		0	0	7	1
Total		8			
Weighted total		2			
Weighted score		0.1			
Total weighted score		3.4			
Equivalent adjectival rating		Good			
Equivalent numerical rating		84			

- The results of the assessment are fed back to the SHG using a rating map matrix. Together with the respondents, the assessment data are processed to identify weak and strong areas in the organisation. The process allows SHG members to self-rate their organisation's performance using the adjectival ratings provided.

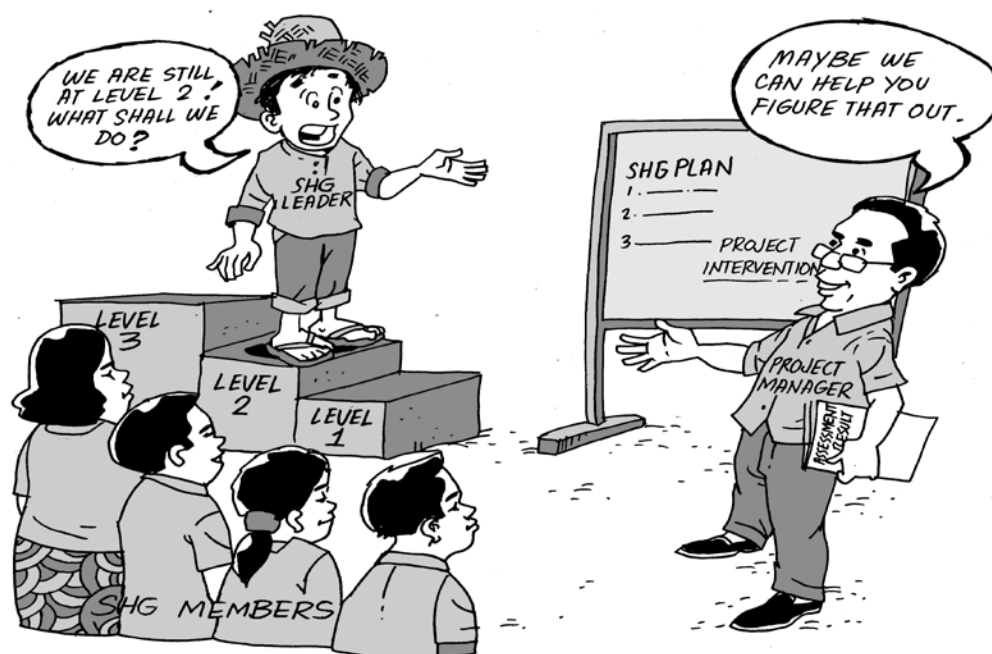
Table 3. The Rating map matrix.

Parameter	Rating				Recommendations
	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	
Organisational					
1. Size of SHG					
2. Constitutional (rules and regulations)	X				
2.1 Formulation	X				
2.2 Compliance	X				
2.3 Accessibility	X				
2.4 Updating		X			
2.5 Penalties for violations, sanctions	X				
3. Economic status of members	X				
4. Meetings conducted	X				
5. Attendance of members in meetings		X			

Parameter	Rating				Recommendations
	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	
6. Participation of members in decisionmaking	X				
7. Sharing of responsibilities					
7.1 Regular rotation of representatives			X		Regular rotation of representatives needed
7.2 Members participation in main functions		X			
8. Common action programs		X			

Data processing, reporting and information communication at the project level

The second level of data processing is done at the M&E Division of the project using MS Excel and results are integrated into the project database. A narrative assessment report is generated and incorporated in the periodic reports submitted by the project to Department of Agrarian Reform and IFAD. The narrative assessment reports containing trends and analyses of SHG assessment are provided to management and component in charge. The assessment reports and recommendations are used by project management in making informed decisions and in planning and designing project interventions.



An excerpt taken from the project level consolidation report of the SHG assessment is shown in table 4.

Table 4. Sample SHG assessment report.

Consolidated SHG assessment report (as of May 31, 2007)						
Province	Rating & frequency distribution of SHGs					Percent total
	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total	
Agusan Del Norte	25	20			45	11.50
Agusan Del Sur	3	40	1		44	11.30
Bukidnon	1	5			6	1.50
Misamis Oriental	24	27	1		52	13.30
Surigao Del Norte	48	51	17	18	134	34.50
Surigao Del Sur	52	50	7		109	28
Total	153	193	26	18	390	100
Percent total	39.20	49.50	6.60	4.70	100	

The consolidated results of 2005 and 2006 assessments indicate that there were 346 SHGs already at level 3 and above (good=153 and average=193), while there were 44 SHGs at level 2 and below (poor=26 and Very Poor=18) that need to be assisted in of organisational capacity building. The current trend indicates that 88.7% of the SHGs assessed have already reached level 3 and above. The 346 SHGs at level 3 and above represents 48.7% of the 710 SHGs projectwide.

The consolidated rating index is 3.134.

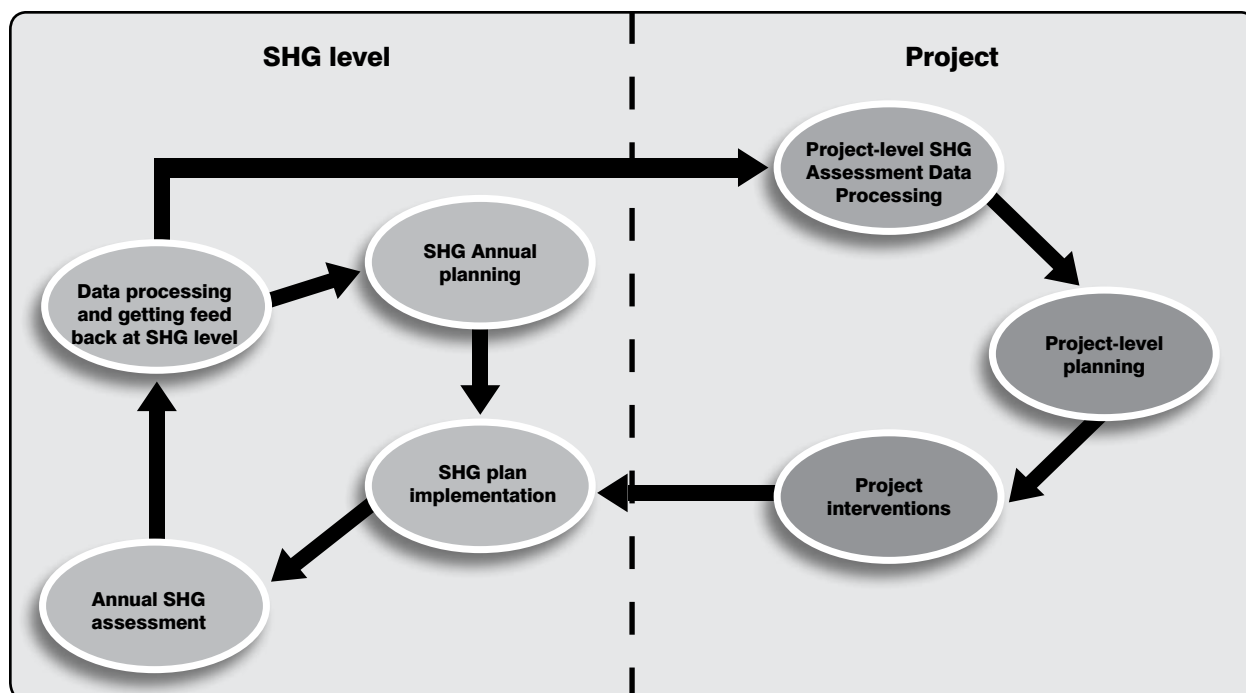


Figure 1. Information flow and utilization at the SHG and project levels.

Lessons learned

1. Pre-testing of questionnaires is a prerequisite before actual use to ensure accuracy in administering the instrument and data processing.
2. Proper orientation/training of assessment facilitators is critical in ensuring an objective assessment.
3. The participation of community members in the assessment process gives the community a sense of ownership and generates community-based solutions for organisational improvement.

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at: org/web/resource/-/resource_library

Acronyms and abbreviations

DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NMCIREMP	Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project
SHG	self-help group
SIHAGA	self-help group assessment

Acknowledgement

The author expresses his thanks to Mr. Yolando C. Arban, IFAD country programme officer-Philippines and former M&E officer of NMCIREMP from 2003 to 2007 for his valuable contributions to the development of this article. He is grateful to his colleagues in the project and associates in the M&E Division who provided valuable assistance in finalising the manuscript.

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Establish Village-Based Participatory M&E Teams



After meeting with the municipal planning and development coordinator at the municipal office, we went back to our barangay to monitor ongoing work on the farm-to-market road. We have to argue with the foreman of the contractor because we've observed certain deviations on the work being done. The foreman ignored our observation so we have to inform the contractor and the municipal engineer."

BPMET Chairperson, Pudong, Kapangan, Benguet Province Ms. Carina Guilan,

Introduction

The significance of community participation in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process of development interventions is recognised under the Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Management Project (CHARMP2), hereafter referred to as the Project.

The participatory M&E process offers new ways of assessing and learning together with community members, making development more inclusive and more responsive to the needs and aspirations of those most directly affected.

Handing over is different from just sharing the stake. Handing over, in CHARMP2, is the act of relinquishing ownership of development interventions to the real owners at the onset of implementation. They are given the chance to participate in the project from inception to implementation to keeping it sustainable.

The CHARMP2 organises and strengthens barangay participatory monitoring and evaluation teams (BPMET) in each of the barangays covered. They take an active role in assisting the Project and local government unit (LGU) officials to ensure that projects are implemented as planned. The organisation of the BPMETs is also among the Project's exit strategy.

The BPMETs are trained in monitoring the projects being implemented within their barangays. They are made to understand the basics of subproject plans, including program of work (POW) of infrastructure subprojects. Achievement of good results is envisaged with BPMETs actively participating in monitoring Project activities, even beyond the project duration.

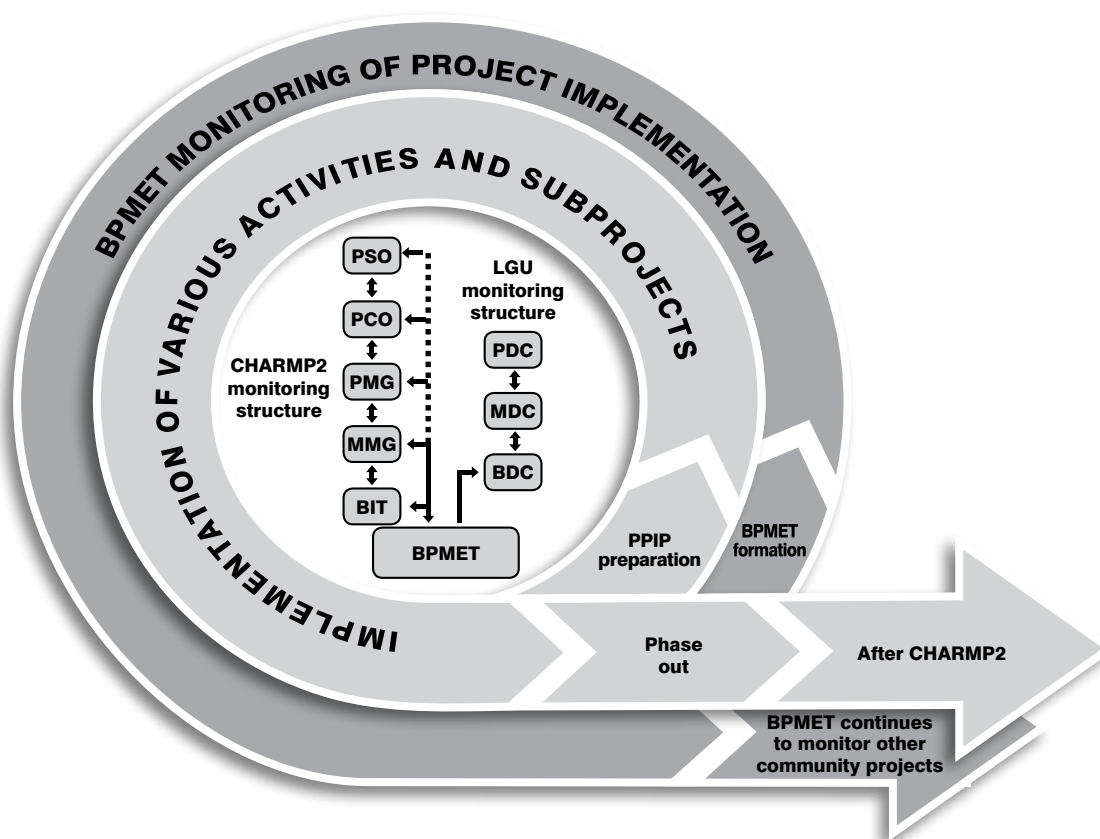
CHARMP2 is a 7-year (2009-2015) project under the Department of Agriculture implemented in 170 barangays of 37 municipalities in six provinces of the Cordillera Administrative Region north of the Philippines. It is jointly funded by the national government of the Philippines, the IFAD, OFID, ADB, local government units and beneficiaries.

The Project supports several projects and activities under the following components:

1. Social Mobilisation, Participatory Investment Planning and Land Tenure
2. Community Watershed Conservation, Forest Management and Agroforestry
3. Agriculture, Agribusiness and Income Generation Activities
4. Rural Infrastructure Development and
5. Project Management and Coordination

Under CHARMP2, participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) is geared toward measuring the effectiveness of subprojects while at the same time building ownership and empowering beneficiaries, building accountability and transparency and, where possible, immediately taking corrective action to improve performance and attain desired outcomes. PME then seeks to encourage stakeholders to take action and improve the flow of information for strategic planning at different levels.

The BPMET framework



CHARMP2's monitoring structure

The Project looks at the status of activities and subprojects from the field through structures established with LGUs. The barangay implementation team (BIT), the municipal management group (MMG) and the provincial management group (PMG) are composed of local government unit officers while the Provincial Coordination Office (PCO) and Project Support Office (PSO) are managed by Project staff. At the barangay level, the BPMET and BIT conduct parallel monitoring based on subproject and activity plans. In most cases, the BPMET complements/counterchecks reports by the BIT (which acts as the field team of the MMG). BPMET reports are integrated into the reports of the MMG, which are periodically submitted to higher management. These structures will be phased out as CHARMP2 ends.

Local government unit's monitoring structure

The LGUs and their corresponding development councils (provincial (PDC), municipal (MDC) and barangay development councils (BDC)) are permanent structures that will be in the Project areas even after CHARMP2 ends. Such structures are mandated by law to monitor implementation of projects within their political jurisdictions. It is envisaged that, at the barangay level, the BPMETs will be supported by the barangay, either by the community or by the barangay LGU, enabling them to assist in monitoring projects.

The barangay is the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines and is the native term for a village, district or ward.

Organising

The BPMET is organised by the community during a general assembly (GA) called for the purpose of adopting the Project Investment Plan for the CHARMP2.

Each BPMET has at least 9 to at most 12 members, depending on the decision of the GA or the barangay assembly. Members of the BPMET are elected by the GA. The PMET is composed of four officers (a chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer) and 5-8 members from the different sectors of the community. While the Project allows a term of office co-terminus with the CHARMP2 duration, it is still the decision of the GA to set the final term of office. In organising the BPMET, 40% of the membership and 30% of the leadership positions are set aside for women.

There are two barangay assembly meetings prescribed under the Philippine Local Government Code of 1991. During such assembly meetings, the GA and their local leaders can review development directions for their barangay. These will be an opportune time to review their BPMET's performance.

Training

Appropriate training provided to members of the BPMETs to build or improve their capacity. Through such training, principles and procedures on M&E are introduced to members of the BPMETs. It is also during training that various subproject plans are discussed with the BPMETs; emphasis is made on the salient parts or items of work in the plan that the BPMETs shall monitor. The municipal or provincial LGU staff and the CHARMP2 staff are invited as resource persons. Trainers include an array of expertise coming from agriculturists, community organisers, engineers and foresters.

The training is composed of two parts. The first part presents M&E basics, including details about the Project's components and targets and reporting requirements. The second part is the practicum, wherein participants do actual monitoring with guidance from the resource persons.

Members of the BDCs are also given the same kind of training as part of the community empowerment efforts of the CHARMP2. This also helps make the barangay LGU appreciate the functions of the BPMET. It is also during such training that community participation is being advocated as an indispensable tool to enhance barangay development.

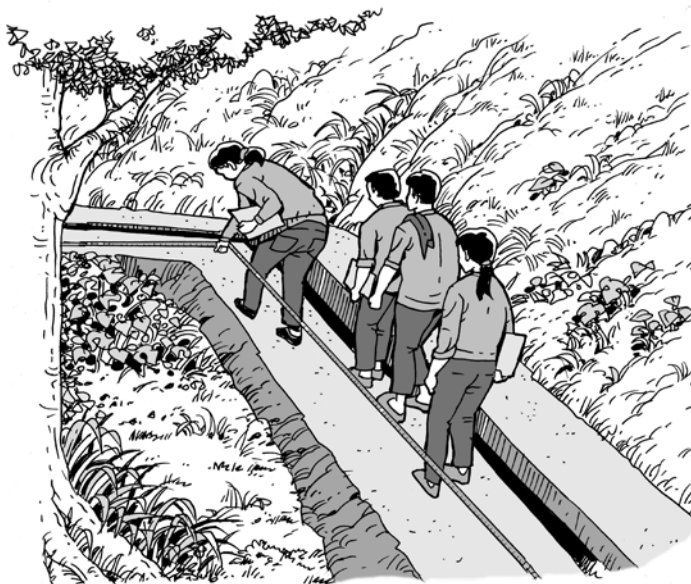
The training seeks to orient and improve capacity of BPMET members on the basics of project M&E systems and procedures. Specifically, it aims to let members

- determine their roles and functions in the various stages of project implementation;
- appreciate the general steps involved in monitoring and evaluating CHARMP2 and other related activities
- describe the M&E reporting and feedback system;
- understand and use project monitoring tools and techniques;
- practice writing monitoring reports; and
- have hands-on experience in proper monitoring and evaluating ongoing projects.

Field monitoring

BPMETs are equipped with measuring devices, project work plans and POW. The POW describes the rural infrastructure work to be undertaken while the work plans describe other subprojects and activities under the other Project components.

The BPMET monitors use prescribed monitoring forms to note down firsthand observations on projects being implemented on the ground. Monitoring forms are customised in such a way that salient information are captured and reported to Project implementation structures.



Steps in field monitoring

1. Coordination on monitoring schedule with the MMG, municipal planning and Development Office and Municipal Engineering Office;
2. Orientation and giving implementers updating on progress of project implementation;
3. Conducting exit meetings with project implementers to discuss observations and recommendations of BPMET.



In the case of rural infrastructure, immediate action in response to the BPMET observations may be done if the construction activity is ongoing or if the activity or work being done is not in the POW. Should there be a change in the POW, the BPMET such change. This is one of the reasons the BPMETs must get constant updates from the MMG or its members.

In most of the business plans prepared for people organisations supported by the Project, the BPMETs are included to provide oversight monitoring at the barangay level.

Reporting

Reports need not be written in perfect English and need not be typewritten. At minimum, reports can be handwritten and the local language/dialect used. This enables monitors to easily express their observations. It is at the MMG level that these reports are translated to English and incorporated into the MMG report to the PMG and ultimately to the PCO and PSO. In most cases, members of the BPMETs also serve as key informants to other Project monitoring teams.

BPMETs can immediately discuss their observations with the contractors and other BIT (MMG field team). However, if their observations are not acted upon, they can give their reports directly to higher Project authority.

“The BPMET is a great help to me. Because of their assistance in monitoring, I am immediately provided updates from the field. I can now devote more time in doing other tasks for other projects in the municipality.”

Engr. Ernesto M. Dela Torre, municipal engineer. Atok, Benguet Province

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAIGA	agriculture, agribusiness and income-generating activities
Barangay	village or ward
BDC	barangay development council
BIT	barangay implementation team
BPMET	barangay participatory monitoring and evaluation team
CHARMP2	Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Management Project

CWCFMA	community watershed conservation, forest management and agroforestry
GA	general assembly
LGU	local government unit
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDC	municipal development council
MMG	municipal management group
PCO	Provincial Coordination Office
PDC	provincial development council
PME	participatory monitoring and evaluation
PMG	provincial management group
POW	program of work
PIIP	participatory project investment planning/plan
PSO	Project Support Office
RID	rural infrastructure development
SMPIPLT	social mobilisation, participatory investment planning and land tenure

Acknowledgement

The authors thank various BPMETs, CMOs and LGU staff for sharing the lessons they learned from their monitoring activities; the Project's Components (SMPIPLT, CWCFMA, AAIGA and RID) for the references. Gratitude is also extended to our project manager, Mr. Cameron P. Odsey and Ms. Marilyn V. Sta. Catalina, CESO IV, project director, for supporting the writing of this article and for supporting the endeavor to empower Project-covered barangays through initiatives such as the establishment of the BPMETs.

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Using the Social Assessment Tool to Assess Impact at the Household Level



The main objective of the social assessment tool (SAT) is to measure the achievement of programme objectives, strengthen the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism, and demonstrate programme effects to policymakers and the public at large. This tool assesses the changes (or the absence of change) in the households of the persons who participate in community organisations (CO). Also, it seeks to uncover the causal relationships or variables that underpin or constrain such changes. It is a survey administered on a sample of programme-involved households. Baseline readings are taken at the start, followed by subsequent measurements from the same households 1 or 2 years later. This is an effective instrument to assess change in the status of poor households. It has been adopted by poverty alleviation fund (PAF) for internal evaluation of outcomes of the programme, in terms of changes in poverty ranking, in income in real terms, and in access to public facilities.

Methodology

Community members rank themselves on the basis of socioeconomic status. The surveys also help the community and the project to assemble basic demographic data (caste, ethnicity and gender). This assessment tool covers parameters such as ownership of assets (e.g., land, house and livestock) sources of income and access to basic public services (e.g., drinking water, roads, schools and health services). Based on these well-being rankings, community members describe their current quality of life by choosing from among different predefined values (for selected indicators.) For example, for identifying the period with secure food sufficiency, households choose from one of four categories: less than 3 months, 3–6 months, 6–12 months and more than 12 months.

The survey is conducted and managed by the communities themselves with the help of PAF partner organisations. Changes in household income, including monetary as well as non-monetary dimensions, are measured. The second survey coincides with and complements the midterm evaluation of the programme. During the analysis, current poverty ranking values and household conditions are compared with those from the previous survey. Please refer to box on page 3 for more details of the assessment.

Established in 2003, the Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) is an autonomous institution that has implemented several income-generating as well as small infrastructure activities through a community demand-driven approach in Nepal. The fund seeks to help poor women (from Dalit, Janajati and other vulnerable groups) gain access to resources for productive self-employment and encourage them to undertake income-generating activities. PAF also aims to address spatial exclusion through focusing on the most deprived districts and reaching out to other poverty-stricken areas. PAF has been working with community organisations for several years. By 2011, it has engaged 17,000 community organisations in implementing programme activities, to the benefit of more than 300,000 households.



Social assessment of community organisations

By using the social assessment form (well-being rankings of CO members), both quantitative and qualitative information are collected at different intervals and later compared and analysed. Changes in wealth and livelihood of the targeted community members are compared with the indicators of PAF projects and accomplished activities.

This methodology enables integration of various types of data and is designed to compare and analyse the impact of PAF projects on the socioeconomic conditions of poor households. The social assessment of the CO members provides household-level data as well as comparative data on CO members. Data for the assessment carried out under the PAF was collected in two rounds of social assessment. The second survey was carried with for 175 COs, representing 4,880 households from 11 districts (Dalit 32.1%, Janjatis 25%, Brahmin/Chhetri 23.1% and others 19.8%). The baseline social assessment of the households was carried out in 2008 and the second survey of the same households was conducted in early 2010. The indicators well-being of CO member households for 2008 are compared with the post-intervention data from 2010.

The comparison with earlier data indicated a marked increase by at least 15% of household income in more than 68% of the total households surveyed. Moreover, the income growth rates of Dalit and Janjatis were higher than the average, showing that the project is reaching those most in need. Among other indicators, PAF also uses the level of food sufficiency of the targeted population. Results show that the percentage of households with food insufficiency of 3 months or less dropped from 66.9% to 24.1%, with a reduction of 63.3% among the CO member households.

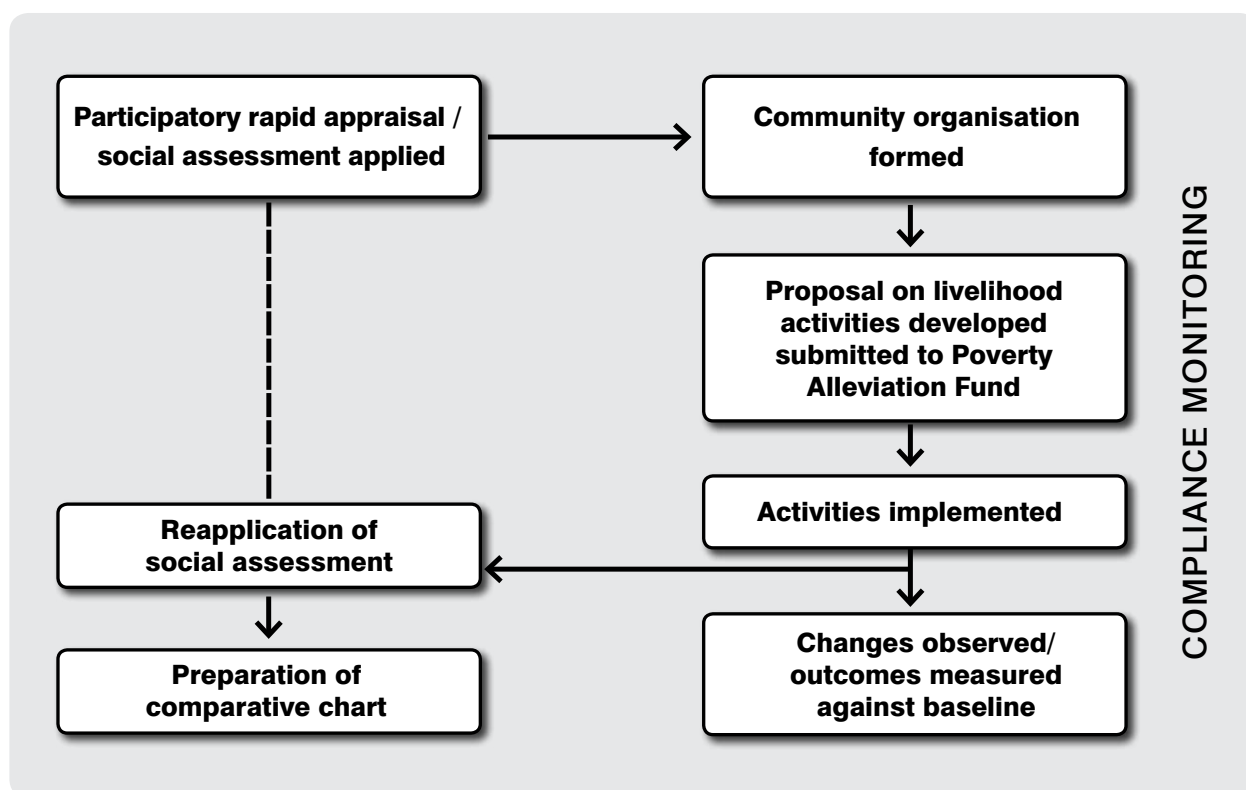


Figure 1. The social assessment process flow chart.

Lessons learned

The social assessment tool provided an efficient and effective way to evaluate the programme interventions. An assessment of significant changes—both in terms of household annual income as well as level of food sufficiency—could be undertaken among the studied households. Lessons included:

- Community involvement is mobilised through the assessment of well-being changes at the household level.
- It is a very simple and effective tool that helps specify the outcomes of project interventions at the household level.
- It is versatile. It can be used as part of the results-based management system and also to strengthen M&E.
- It is easy to apply. This tool can be used by any literate person. With the help of literate members from the community, illiterate members can also fillout the forms.
- This tool provides a real-life picture of the changes brought about by various projects interventions at the household level.

Challenges

- It is time-consuming and labour-intensive. It takes one full day for data collection and another day for data entry and analysis of results (covering 20 households).
- It can be done once or twice a year, depending on available resources and programme needs.
- It cannot be applied to all COs as some have not yet reached a sufficiently mature stage in the implementation of activities to register significant changes in outcomes.
- It cannot be used as a comprehensive/extensive M&E system, but it can supplement existing data-heavy M&E systems.

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PAF Implementation Guideline

PAF website: www.pafnepal.org.np

Acronyms and abbreviations

CO	community organisations
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
SAT	social assessment tool

Acknowledgement

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Community-Led Documentation and Reporting System



Documenting decisionmaking and project processes is seen by IFAD and local governments as essential for securing community participation in the implementation of development projects. However, limited capacities and high illiteracy rates pose significant constraints to the adoption of a standardised approach to documentation and monitoring by the community. Involving beneficiary communities in monitoring and tracking changes is important in IFAD-supported projects. In response, two community participatory tools tailored for communities with limited capacity were developed:

(1) the voucher-based expenditure monitoring system and the (2) participatory process monitoring system. These tools were developed and used by the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) in India. They were used by communities to document their decisionmaking process and to track the effectiveness of project actions. As a result, the involvement of local communities in monitoring project progress was significantly enhanced.

Why voucher-based expenditure monitoring system?

OTELP was designed to devolve as much responsibility as possible for planning, budgeting and implementation to local communities. The voucher-based expenditure monitoring system was developed for use by semi-literate or illiterate communities, providing them with direct project management experience when working with donors and government. The instrument was developed to simplify the process of documenting and collecting information regarding project activities.

The voucher-based expenditure monitoring system is a simple template-based tool to report expenditures incurred each month, based on activities planned by each village.

- Expenditures are categorised into purchases of goods or materials and wage payments made to improve productivity of land, water and forest resources.
- Each payment generates a voucher that indicates the details of the purchase (e.g., who sold the materials, the price and the purpose of procurement). Similarly, payments made for labour indicate the number of persons working, duration of work and the results achieved.
- A summary of the vouchers is recorded in a single-page format, with all necessary details (voucher/muster roll number, case record number, name of the activity, amount paid, etc.). This data entry is usually done once a month and the results are reported to the Village Social and Financial Audit Committee for approval. These forms are collected and consolidated by participating facilitators and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who verify the data.
- The case record booklet is structured according to the flow of the project's implementation steps (see Figure 1).

OTELP: A brief background

IFAD, along with Department for International Development and World Food Programme supported the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) in Odisha, India, in 2003. The aim was to ensure that the livelihoods and food security of poor tribal households are improved and self-managed through sustainable utilisation of available natural resources and through off-farm/non-farm enterprise development. The programme is operational in 30 blocks of 7 southwestern districts of Odisha, India, where these two tools have been piloted and adopted.

Case record

The case record is a booklet where sequences of templates are organised in a manner that enables the Village Development Committee (VDC) follow the steps required to implement project activities. The purpose is to create documentary evidence of the implementation of the activity. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for community members to adopt a management practice to achieve better results and take corrective action which is the foundation of results-based management.

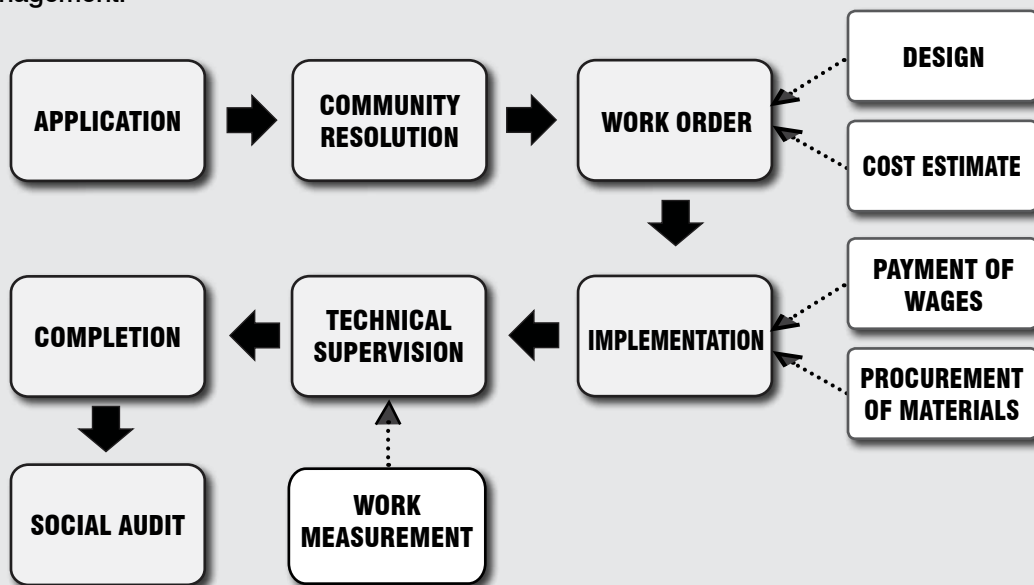


Figure 1. Documentation flow in a case record used for the Voucher-based expenditure monitoring system.

Impact on the community

The voucher-based expenditure monitoring system is not merely about generating documented evidence of activity implementation. It also provides community members with valuable experience in project management; it enables the community to take corrective actions, ultimately providing better results.

The templates are the unique added value of this tool. These are number-coded and developed in the local language. Data entry is entrusted to the youth of the village, who are trained to fill out the templates. Illiterate women who are interested can also participate in the training. As a result, semi-literate or illiterate community members are able to contribute to the monitoring process and are able to participate more actively in project implementation.



Challenges

The laborious documentation and file updates are very time-consuming for the community. Also, enhancing the numerical skills of the illiterate youth posed an initial challenge to the facilitators. But, with additional training sessions, the youth volunteers became well-versed with the process.

Participatory process monitoring system

The participatory process monitoring system is a tool applied annually by the communities to measure the effectiveness of planning, implementation and monitoring of project interventions. The key objective is to track how community members/institutions are adhering to all the outlined steps of the project. Specific parameters have been developed for each process step. For each parameter, three evaluation options are described in pictorial form (low, average and high). During a village meeting, community members give a score to the parameters and provide explanations for the grading of performance. The activity is implemented in one day (known as Self-Evaluation Day, Atma Samikhya Divas), with 30–40 beneficiary families. The number of participating beneficiary families is intentionally kept low to ensure adequate and effective participation by each family.

Predefined steps are adopted by the communities in the application of this tool. The event is hosted by the Village Development Association (VDA) (a community-based organisation where one male and one female adult member from each household participate).

- The executive committee of the VDA and VDC, consisting of 12–15 community members, make a presentation on the progress and the completed activities. During the presentation, beneficiary families discuss the activities, sharing their comments and raising potential concerns.
- Different categories of beneficiaries can participate in the meeting: individuals, families and self-help groups.
- The participants visit the intervention sites to verify the completion of the work and the results.
- At the end, the community reconvenes to discuss about the visit and assess the quality of the intervention as well as to consider the steps needed for further improvement.

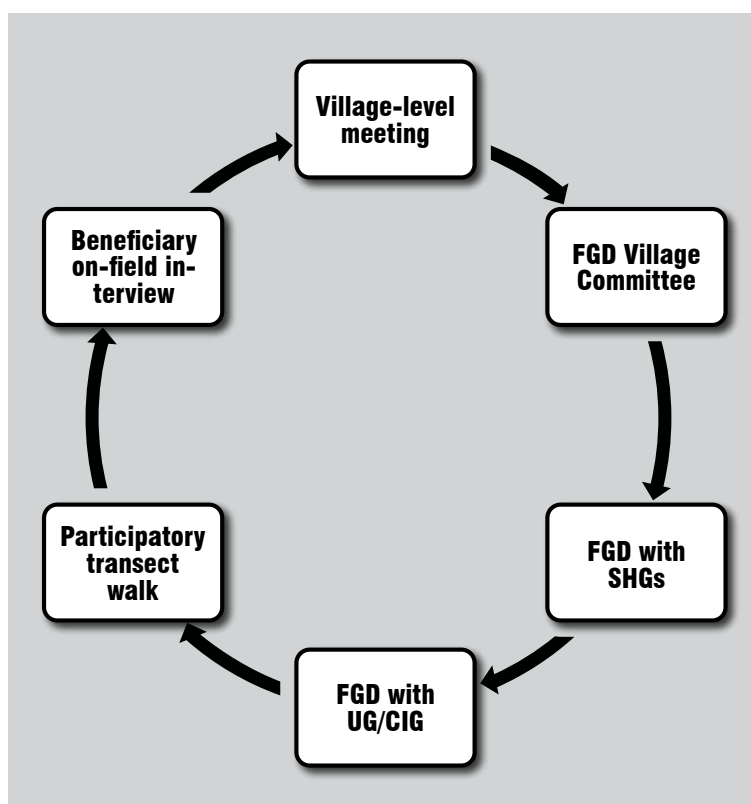


Figure 2. Sequence of steps followed for participatory process monitoring.

The process involves predefined steps and utilises participatory tools, such as focus group discussion (FGD), village transect walk, and community meetings.

The quality of the implementation processes and outcomes is categorised into seven areas/parameters (see Box 1). These indicators are ranked by the community members in the village meeting and compared with the previous year's results. These indicators are also used for knowledge sharing with other stakeholders, like NGO staff and government officials, enabling participants to discuss successes or failures of the intervention. This approach helps strengthen community members' knowledge and understanding of project interventions.



Thematic areas that serve as parameters for monitoring

- a. Institutional aspect
- b. Community organisation
- c. Project management
- d. Participatory implementation and monitoring
- e. Financial aspects
- f. Capacity building of stakeholders
- g. Empowerment-centered plan

One of the most innovative features in this process is the ranking of indicators by community members using a colour-coded grading system (red for low performance, yellow for average and green for high performance of project actions). Using colour-coded ranking facilitates monitoring by illiterate participants. In addition, pictures, photographs and drawings are also used to describe the different values of the indicators.

The results are entered into an Excel template to generate a web diagram for comparison with results from previous years. The analysis is shared with the communities to stimulate reflection on the long-term impact of the project. As participation in the M&E exercise is mandatory, it ensures that all beneficiaries are involved and engaged in assessing project impact and in planning and making decisions about subsequent actions.



Challenges

Gathering all village members for an entire day can be a daunting task. In large villages (more than 50 families), the exercise was done in clusters of families. During the initial years of project implementation, conflict arose as the project could only engage a limited number of families in the villages. Also, differences in capacity between different NGOs and organisations that consolidated the village-level data posed challenges in ensuring data integrity and validity. This problem was addressed by providing capacity-strengthening support to facilitators.

Lessons learned

- By dividing community members into groups and linking these beneficiary groups with the specific livelihood intervention, the participatory monitoring exercise increased the beneficiaries' sense of ownership over the assets/interventions.
- Management and technical know-how of the beneficiary groups also increased, which resulted in improved management and decisionmaking processes during implementation.
- By using a broad spectrum of parameters/indicators, the participatory process monitoring system was able to capture a wealth of different opinions from the beneficiaries on the different aspects of project planning, implementation and monitoring.
- The use of multiple visual cues proved invaluable in engaging and securing inputs from members of the community with the lowest levels of formal education and literacy.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CIG	common interest group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
OTELP	Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme

SHGs	self-help groups
UG	user group
VDA	Village Development Association
VDC	Village Development Committee

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TECHNICAL GUIDELINES



Using Focus Group Discussions to Complement Survey Findings



A focus group discussion (FGD) is a facilitated discussion among 8 to 12 carefully selected participants, who discuss a topic among themselves, with guidance from a facilitator. It is used to obtain in-depth qualitative information on the perceptions and ideas from a group of people who have something in common (women smallholders, cacao farmers, at-risk youth, etc.). Homogeneous groups are indeed preferred because mixed groups (different gender, age, social status) may inhibit some people, especially women or the youth, from expressing their views in front of others. Focus group discussions are structured around a set of predetermined questions—usually no more than 10—but the aim is to foster a

free-flowing discussion. Ideally, the participants' own comments will stimulate and influence the thinking and sharing of others in the group. If facilitated well, FGDs can bring out rich and detailed information and provide a valuable opportunity to gain insights into behaviours, attitudes and feelings. It takes several FGDs (usually 3 or 4) on any one topic to produce valid results. A good indication for having reached the goals of this qualitative research tool is when the discussion points and opinions keep repeating themselves—i.e., the point of saturation is reached. Focus group discussions generate qualitative information, with textual description of a certain situation as the output. The findings will not be representative of the views of the entire population. This is why FGDs are best used to complement the findings of Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) surveys or annual outcome surveys, for example, to better understand specific findings that emerge from these surveys.

Limitations of FGDs

- Facilitation of a focus group requires considerable skills, both in moderating the group and in adequately recording the responses.
- The flexible format makes it susceptible to facilitator bias, which can undermine the validity and reliability of the findings.
- Discussions can be sidetracked or dominated by a few vocal individuals.
- The information can be difficult to analyse; comments should be interpreted in the context of the group setting.

Before going to the field

When preparing for an annual outcome/RIMS survey, the topics or themes to be discussed in FGDs and the specific information needs for each topic are identified (e.g., the information you need in order to know whether a particular outcome was achieved and why or why not). The number of topics to be discussed in focus groups will mainly depend on (i) the identified information gaps and (ii) the time and resources available. For each discussion topic, interview guides (a list of open-ended questions) are prepared. A short narrative of the objective of the focus group is included in each interview guide, so that the facilitator always has the objective of the discussion in mind and can refocus the discussion when necessary. In the interview guide, a blank space under each question is provided so that the assistant facilitator can easily take notes. One copy of the interview guide is for each focus group. Interview guides are pretested before going to the field. Pretesting provides an opportunity to determine whether the wording of the questions is appropriate or whether questions elicit discussion and to identify questions that are not easily understood. Pretesting can be conducted during the training of enumerators.

A focus group interview guide will have the following elements:

Name of moderator:

Name of assistant:

Location:

Date:

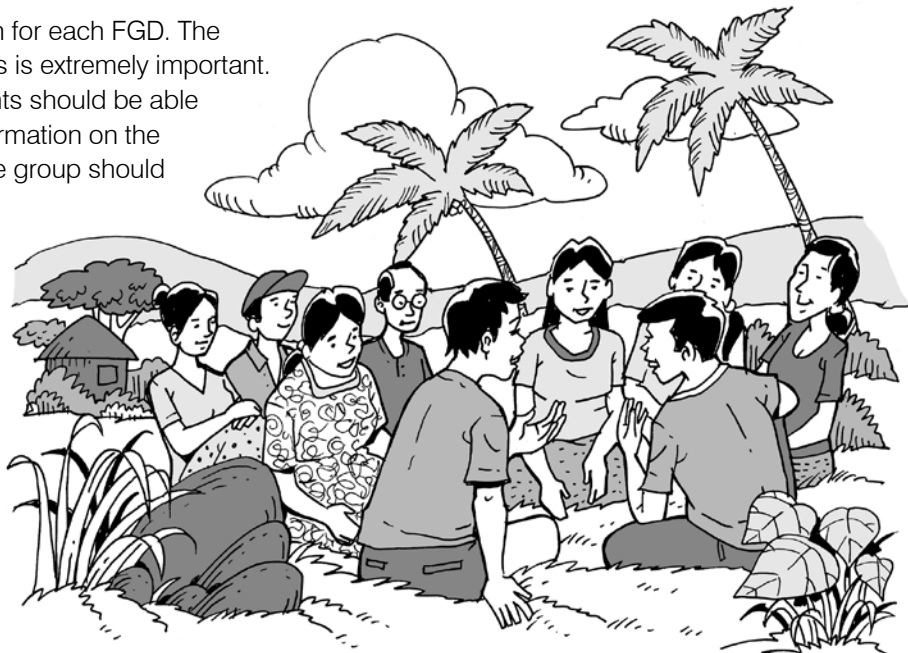
Discussion topic:

Number of participants:

Questions: *(Blank space for note taking)*

Data collection: how to conduct an FGD

- Upon arrival in each village, the village leader is briefed on the plan for discussions. Permission to interview village members is obtained. One or more FGDs in each village are conducted, though ideally, it would be best not to discuss different topics with the same group.
- Participants are chosen for each FGD. The selection of participants is extremely important. Focus group participants should be able to provide relevant information on the particular topic, and the group should be heterogeneous enough so that various and diverse opinions can be gathered. It may be a good idea to consult village leader(s) and field workers in the selection of focus group participants.



Characteristics of good facilitators and note takers

A good facilitator should have

- previous experience in qualitative data collection
- previous experience in collecting data related to rural development
- strong interview skills
- an understanding of group dynamics
- an interest in the subject and in the participants' views (curiosity)
- the ability to understand and elaborate on the participants' opinions
- familiarity with key concepts related to rural development
- knowledge of the local language and an ability to accurately translate the information into the language of the study (e.g., English)

A good note taker/assistant should have

- familiarity with key concepts related to rural development
- knowledge of the local language and an ability to accurately translate the information into the language of the study (e.g. English)

- Ideally, the FGD should be led by a moderator and followed by an assistant who will take notes.
- The topic is introduced to explain the objectives of the FGD. Example: *'This discussion should help us understand what impact project activities have had on the empowerment of women in the community'.*
- Participants are told that every participant is expected to contribute to the discussion. Example: *'Before we start, I would like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. We are interested in knowing what each of you think, so please feel free to be frank and to share your point of view, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with what you hear. It is very important that we hear all your opinions.'*
- The discussion should take no more than 1 hour. The ideal duration is 45 minutes; if it is longer, there is a risk that participants will become tired and will stop participating actively.
- The focus group facilitator has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted. The facilitator also has a responsibility to engage all participants in the discussion and to

Tips for an effective FGD

Location: Conduct FGDs in a relatively private place, where participants feel comfortable to freely share their opinions.

Introduction: The facilitator should open the session with a traditional greeting and other local conventions for group gatherings (e.g., a prayer), explain who they are and whom they work for, the purpose of the data collection, what will be done with the information, and who will have access to it. Facilitators should then explain that they do not make decisions about assistance or interventions.

Flexibility: The facilitator should begin the discussion in general terms and move on to more specific topics. They should be flexible, making sure at the same time that all topics are covered (following the interview guide). Allowing participants enough space and time to speak their mind, while guiding the conversation in the right direction, is a difficult task.

Participation: Facilitators should be constantly aware of their own biases and the ways in which they may be perceived by participants. The tone of discussions should be informal, not interrogatory. Although care should be taken to ensure that all participants in a group context contribute to the discussion, the facilitator should respect sensitive issues and the right of participants not to respond.

Timing: Fieldwork is time-sensitive work, which needs to pay close attention to the schedule of the study (e.g., deadlines for submitting the reports); the scheduled time for the FGD (e.g., key informants may be busy working in the field) and the season of the year (e.g., key participants may not be available due to seasonal migration). It is important that each team knows how to handle the various problems that may arise. For example, the team will have to be aware of security concerns (it may be better to schedule discussions before sundown).

Review: After the FGD is completed, the facilitator and the assistant should review the findings, compare notes and share experiences. This is a crucial step, which may yield important lessons for improving data gathering in the subsequent focus groups.

stimulate their contribution. If needed, follow-up questions can be used to motivate the participants to talk and fully explain their answers:

- ♦ 'Can you talk about that more?'
 - ♦ 'Why do you feel that.....'
 - ♦ 'Can you give an example of what you mean?'
- Detailed notes are taken during the discussion. This will facilitate the subsequent analysis. Ideally, the note taker should preanalyse the results during the discussion so that only the most important points are recorded..

Troubleshooting: examples of what could go wrong

The facilitator should consider the checklist below and prepare to respond appropriately.

- The focus group participants are very quiet, unresponsive and reluctant to answer questions.
- Some of the participants arrive late or do not show up at all.
- A number of other local people (who were not selected as participants) want to join the discussion.
- The local authorities have set up the venue so that the facilitator has chairs and a table, but the participants have mats on the ground.
- The discussion on one topic goes on far much longer than expected.
- The village leader wants to sit in on the focus group.
- One focus group participant is dominating the discussion.
- The venue for the focus group is noisy or uncomfortable so that participants are distracted during the discussion.
- The facilitation team is unexpectedly invited to join the village chief of local authorities for lunch, but you have arranged to leave in order to get to another focus group in the afternoon.
- During the discussion, some of the participants talk about a serious problem (e.g., community conflict, child abuse, corruption, labor abuses) that has had an important impact on project activities.

Analysing and reporting the results of FGDs

The facilitator will prepare a report on each FGD, outlining the key topics discussed, the most commonly expressed views and a broad analysis of the preliminary findings. The person in charge of data analysis will prepare summaries of the focus group reports, covering the various themes and participant views. The analyst and the facilitators need to work closely together to review the focus group reports and discuss the findings. This is essential if the focus group was held in a language other than the language of the report.

How to structure open-ended information for easy analysis

- A short summary is produced of the main points mentioned by each respondent for each question.
- The points most frequently mentioned are noted. All the responses are then read. They are then categorised (e.g., those 'for' or 'against' a certain issue or by degree of enthusiasm about an issue).
- Important quotes are extracted to emphasise certain points and give depth to the analysis.
- Other colleagues are also asked to look over the responses to minimise the facilitators' biases in the interpretation of the findings.
- Following the list of points developed, the main points are identified. Using this numbered coding system, the information is prioritised, summarised and then analysed.

Useful internet resources

On-line training module on focus group discussion:

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-56615-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Tips for conducting focus groups interviews:

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnaby233.pdf

WFP technical guidance sheet on qualitative data analysis:

<http://www.wfp.org/content/technical-guidance-sheet-no9-qualitative-data-collection-and-analysis-food-security-assessments>

Reference

M&E/KM Toolkit, IFAD Asia Pacific Division, Unpublished materials. May 2011.

Acronyms and abbreviations

FGD	focus group discussion
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System

How Do We Gather Baseline Data for Impact Evaluation



FAD is placing increasing emphasis on impact evaluation of the projects that it supports. Good-quality impact evaluation not only provides a justification for the investment in the project (assuming that the evaluation shows a worthwhile positive impact), but we can also generate some useful lessons on what development initiatives work and what do not work.

The problem is how do we do this? What is needed is evidence that goes beyond a story or an anecdote, which can convince readers of the document that the project has generated certain results. This evidence is usually generated by a some sort of sample survey. Other means of gathering evidence can also be used, such as participatory rural appraisal, focus group discussions and case studies, but these lack the rigor of a sample survey in that it cannot be proven (by statistical analysis) that the information gathered is really representative of the entire group under investigation. However, these methods are very useful in understanding processes and why change happens (or does not happen).

A formal survey uses a questionnaire to gather data from a randomly selected sample of project participants with a sufficient number being interviewed to produce results that are representative of all participants. To measure change, some sort of comparison is needed. Two types of comparison are possible. First, the “before and after”: compares current information on the project sample with information from before project interventions took place. In this way, the change that took place can be measured. Second, the “with and without” compares information on the project sample with that on a sample of households that did not take part in project interventions (a “control group”).

The drawback of relying only on changes measured “before and after” is that changes may well have taken place without the interventions of the project. A simple “with and without” comparison does not provide information on change. We need to estimate the “change without the project”, known as the “counterfactual.” This can be done by comparing “before and after” changes for a project sample with changes for a control sample. This is known as the “difference in difference” approach.

To measure these changes, information on the pre-intervention (baseline) situation is needed from both the project and control samples. For ongoing projects, this can be difficult. Baseline information may not have been collected or may not cover the indicators needed to measure project impact. Although projects often collect baseline data on project participants, they may not have it for a control group.

One way of obtaining baseline information is to ask survey respondents to recall the pre-intervention situation—in other words, to make their own estimate. This “recall” method is, of course, less accurate than having real data collected at the time (when it was “fresh”). However, it can be surprisingly precise. Last year, an IFAD project in Bangladesh, the Micro-Finance for Marginal and Small Farmers Project came to an end. An impact study was commissioned, carried out by the Nielsen Company Bangladesh Ltd. This used the recall measure to collect data on the pre-project situation. However, the project also had pre-project information on some indicators as household profiles were completed at the time people joined the project groups (mostly in 2006 and 2007), and an analysis of a sample of 600 of these profile forms had been made as a baseline study.

The following table compares recall baseline data from the impact study with actual baseline data from the household profiles. This shows that, for most of these indicators, indicator data at entry into the project (i.e., at baseline) using the actual baseline profiles is within 10% of that collected in the impact survey using recall estimates. The difference is significantly greater for the number of poultry, use of latrines, and total household income. These are indicators that would seem to be more difficult to recall with any degree of accuracy, especially income.

Table 1. Comparison of recall baseline data with actual baseline data.

			Before	After
Average land owned	Acres	Baseline	1.39	
		Impact	1.32	1.61
Paddy production	Acres	Baseline	2.71	
		Impact	2.50	2.89
	Total tons	Baseline	5.33	
		Impact	4.90	5.68
Number of animals per household	Cattle	Baseline	1.59	
		Impact	1.70	2.00
	Sheep/goat	Baseline	1.37	
		Impact	1.30	1.40
	Poultry	Baseline	14.72	
		Impact	13.20	19.20
Household income	Taka/year	Baseline	77,271.00	
		Impact	92,934.00	108,781.00
Open pit or no latrine	% of households	Baseline	24.00	
		Impact	27.00	5.80

This analysis suggests that recall data can be used to reconstruct a pre-intervention baseline, providing indicators that respondents can reasonably remember.

Recall also has the advantage that the same households are providing both baseline and impact-level data. The data in the table show that changes between the “before” and “after” situations can be quite small. Collecting baseline and impact data from separate samples means that different households may be interviewed in baseline and impact surveys. Inevitably, there will be underlying differences in these samples (i.e., not caused by project interventions).

For example, the “before” average number of sheep and goats per household in the baseline profiles was 1.37, compared with 1.30 recalled in the impact survey. This difference is only 5.4%, but the “after” project

average number only increased to 1.40. In this case, recall gives a much bigger increase of 0.10 (7.7%) than if the increase was calculated using the baseline profiles ($0.03 = 2.2\%$). Ideally, real baseline data are collected from a sample of households at the start of the project, with these same households being re-interviewed for mid-term and/or completion surveys. This is known as a “panel sample”, but it adds another level of complication (finding the same households for each round of survey) to the data collection process.

The conclusion is that, even if baseline data were not collected at the start of the project, an impact evaluation can still be carried out using a reconstructed baseline based on recall. But this evaluation should be limited to indicators that respondents can recall with reasonable accuracy. Secondary data can also be useful to confirm if the changes apparent in the control group reflect the changes in the larger population.

Reference

IFAD Asia Blog

Acronym and abbreviation

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

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Key Informant Interviews



What is a key informant interview?

- The term “key informant” refers to a person who can provide detailed information and opinions on a particular subject based on his/her knowledge of this particular issue.
- Example: If you need information on how project activities have influenced the use of water resources in the community, key informants could be the leaders of a water users' group.
- Key informants can be young or old and may come from a variety of socioeconomic or ethnic groups.
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) are open-ended, semistructured interviews. Every interview should have clear objectives in terms of what kind of information is needed and how this information will be used.
- The output of a KII is a textual description of a situation, guided by standard questions.

When are KIIs needed?

- Key informant interviews are tools that will help one to develop an *in-depth understanding of qualitative* issues and obtain *suggestions and recommendations* from key informants. They may thus provide a basis to explore new ideas that have not been discussed before.
- Often, KIIs are used to gather qualitative information that will be used to “triangulate”¹ the findings of other types of evaluation methods (e.g., quantitative surveys).
- While there are other qualitative evaluation tools (e.g., focus group discussions²), KIIs are best used if *some type of information can only be obtained in a context of full confidentiality*.

Example: In order to understand why 80% of members of farmer groups are not satisfied with project services, as shown in a recent survey, interviewing key informants (e.g., reputable leaders of farmer groups or individual farmers) may be better than organising focus group discussions with groups of farmers, as some farmers may be too shy to express their views in public or in front of their leaders.

- Also, this is the method best recommended for complex issues of a more general nature or for issues that may concern the whole community and for which individual farmers may not have answers.

Limitations of KIIs

While KIIs have a number of advantages—for example, they provide the opportunity to explore new ideas and they are simple to conduct and inexpensive—they also have a number of limitations:

- The information obtained *can be biased* if the key informant was not properly selected. Key informants are not necessarily among village elites or leaders; a key informant can also be a simple farmer who is known to be smart, respected and outspoken.
- Results of key KIIs will not always be representative of what the entire community thinks and they may *overlook the perspectives of community members who are less visible*. Again, this stresses the importance of careful selection of key informants.
- The information that one will get will provide very little basis for quantification. This is why such method should be used in conjunction with surveys.
- Open-ended information is more difficult and time-consuming to synthesise well enough to obtain clear results. Also, it can be difficult to keep interviews focused, making different interviews difficult to compare properly.
- Key informant interviews are also usually more difficult to conduct and they require more interviewing skills. The interviewer will need to be well prepared and well informed in order to get the most out of the interview.
- Key informant interviews are also susceptible to interviewer bias, as the interviewer may only pick up information that confirms his/her preconceived ideas.

¹ In social sciences, **triangulation** means that more than two methods are used in a study with a view to double (or triple) checking results. This is also called “cross examination”.

² See Technical Guidelines N° 3.

Before going to the field

- Identify the discussion topics for which you need answers. The number and kinds of topics to discuss with key informants will depend on the time and resources available.
- The questions should be such that interviewees can express opinions through a discussion/dialogue. A logical sequence of the questions should help the discussion flow. (See annex for examples of questions.)
- For each discussion topic, prepare an *interview guide*.
- For each discussion topic, determine how many interviews are required (usually 3-4 per discussion topic).

Interview guide – suggested content

- **Name of interviewer and key informant**
- **Location and date**
- **Brief description of the objectives of the interview**
- **Lists of questions for the key informant, with blank space on which to write answers**
- **Blank space for general comments by the interviewer(s)**

- Identify the key informants. This is usually done by:
 - ♦ Identifying the relevant groups from which key informants may be drawn (e.g., water user associations, women groups).
 - ♦ Consulting several knowledgeable persons (e.g., village leaders, field workers, project staff) who will help you select your key informants. For each discussion topic, be sure to interview a mix of people (of different ages, ethnicity, religious affiliation, educational level).
 - ♦ Preparing the final list of key informants but being ready to add additional key informants once interviews are started (it often happens that, during an interview with a key informant, the name of a new key informant may be suggested).

In most cases, 15 to 35 key informants are sufficient for most studies or even less if KIs are combined with other methods.

- Train interviewers to ensure that they understand the purpose and they develop the proper skills (how to encourage discussion, take accurate and useful notes, etc.). Training needs to address team preparation, interview context, selection of key informants, sensitive listening, sensitive questioning, judging responses, recording the interview and self-critical review.
- Pretest the interview guides to make sure that the questions are appropriate and accurate enough, and that the answers permit useful analysis. Pretesting provides an opportunity to determine whether the wording of the questions is appropriate, whether questions elicit discussion and whether questions are easily understood. Pretesting can be conducted during the training of enumerators.

Data collection

- Upon arrival in each village, talk to the village leader to present the work being conducted and ask for permission to interview village members.
- When you start the interview with the key informant, introduce yourself, the project (if needed) and explain the purpose of the interview. Be sure the informant understands the purpose of the interview and what you intend to do with the information you will receive from him/her.
- A good introduction will gain the interest and cooperation of the respondent without biasing the respondent's answers. Emphasise the fact that the interview results will remain confidential (in the sense that the name of the informant will not be associated with the answers collected).
- As in focus group discussions, KIs are best conducted by two people, one leading the discussion and the other taking note. Accurate note taking is particularly important to make analysis and interpretation possible.
- A good interviewer will have the following abilities:
 - ♦ Ability to listen and neutrality (does not share his/her own views on the subject)
 - ♦ Familiarity with the issue discussed (to be able to ask additional, unanticipated questions if required)
 - ♦ Ability to seek clarification and elaboration on initial responses provided while maintaining a conversational tone (to avoid making the informant feel interrogated, judged or misunderstood.)

Data analysis and reporting

- Proper note taking during the interview will facilitate the analysis³ stage. It is also a good idea to sit down right after each interview and put your thoughts on paper: a summary, your impressions of the key informant's feelings, and anything else that seems relevant.
- Since the result of each interview will be long hand-written interview texts, the first step involves the preparation of electronic interview summaries so as to reduce information into manageable themes, issues and recommendations. These summaries will only retain the key views, main points and recommendations made by each key informant.
- At the same time, it can be useful to add descriptive codes in the margin of hand-written interview texts. This will allow you, in subsequent stages, to more easily retrieve detailed information related to a specific topic or find more easily exact quotes from the informants.

⇒ *For example, if a recurrent sub-question under all main questions was "access to information by the poor", the descriptive code "Poor-ACS" can be handwritten in the margin of the hand-written interview text whenever this issue is covered in the document.*

³ Links to useful guidelines: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABS541.pdf and <http://www.wfp.org/content/technical-guidance-sheet-no9-qualitative-data-collection-and-analysis-food-security-assessments>

- The next step will involve the consolidation of all interview summaries. For each discussion topic/ theme, a short report (2-3 pages) should be produced, showing the most important elements to take into consideration for project management. Convergent views, as well as conflicting opinions, shall be highlighted.
- Whenever possible, visual displays (tables, boxes, charts) shall be used to help communicate the findings more effectively.
- When the same topic was discussed both in focus group discussions and KIIs, compile the findings in the same report. If both are also combined with a quantitative survey, you can then prepare a case study report.

Reference

M&E/KM Toolkit, IFAD Asia Pacific Division, Unpublished materials. May 2011.

Acronyms and abbreviations

KII	key Informant Interview
NRM	natural resources management

ANNEX

Framework for developing the key informant questionnaire guides - examples.

Topic and key informant	Objectives	Suggested questions
<p>External factors affecting food security and agricultural production during the last 12 months</p> <p><i>Possible key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village leaders/ elders • Representatives of farmers' groups • Representatives of women groups • Village doctors/ nurses • Government extension staff who know the village well 	<p>Assess whether external shocks have had a significant impact on the food security of the population in the village</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What shocks have affected the population of the village during the past 12 months? (drought, floods, crop pests and diseases, livestock diseases, sudden lack or loss of employment, unusually high level of human disease, fire, high costs of agricultural inputs, earthquake, theft, conflicts, etc.) • How have these shocks affected agricultural production and farmers' income? • Which categories of households were the most affected (e.g., farmers, pastoralists, female-headed households)? • What are the other effects on food security at the household and community levels? • Were there any interventions by the government or NGOs to address the situation? Was it enough? Did all households benefit? • If such external shocks/events would occur again in the near future, what could the project do to help?
<p>Natural resource management (NRM)</p> <p><i>Possible key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRM group members • Government extension staff who know the village well 	<p>Assess whether NRM activities are having the intended impact on livelihoods of the community</p> <p>Identify problems and find solutions for improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When has the group been functional? What is the composition of the group? What is the purpose/ mandate of the group? • What is the current status of the natural resource base? (e.g., is pasture land overgrazed? are forests overexploited?) How important is this natural resource base for the livelihoods of the community? • How many members are actively participating? What is the frequency of meetings?

Topic and key informant	Objectives	Suggested questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Staff from environmental protection agency who know the village well</i> • <i>Village leaders/ elders</i> • <i>Farmers not part of the NRM group and known for their reluctance to be part of the NRM group</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the activities that have been implemented so far by the group? Are these activities already having a positive impact on the natural resource base? • Are group activities well accepted by the whole community/villages? What are the principle problems encountered? Is the group able to solve problems effectively? • How can natural resource management activities be further improved?
<p>Infrastructure management</p> <p><i>Possible key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Representatives of infrastructure users' groups (e.g., water users' associations)</i> • <i>Villagers who use the infrastructure</i> • <i>Representatives of women's groups</i> • <i>Village leaders/ elders</i> • <i>District/gov. civil engineers who know the village well</i> 	<p>Understand whether infrastructure are effectively managed and responsive to the needs of the community</p> <p>Identify ways for improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the condition of existing village infrastructure (roads, schools, drinking water, transport, irrigation, communication, sanitation)? • What new infrastructure did the project finance? What types of infrastructure were renovated with project support? How was the infrastructure constructed/renovated? (e.g., by the villagers themselves, by a construction company) • What was the process for selecting the infrastructure to be constructed/renovated? Was it an inclusive process? Did women and the youth participate in this identification/selection process? • How many people are/will benefit from these new/renovated infrastructure? Are people satisfied with the infrastructure? How has the infrastructure changed the living conditions of the beneficiaries? • What are the systems in place for infrastructure operation and maintenance? Are these systems/mechanisms effective? Do people pay fees or taxes to use this infrastructure? • What are the current problems? What could be done to solve these problems?

Topic and key informant	Objectives	Suggested questions
<p>Access to markets</p> <p><i>Possible key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Representatives from farmers' groups or associations</i> • <i>Local traders</i> • <i>Staff from local auction yards</i> • <i>Staff from local/central agricultural statistics bureau</i> • <i>Local transporters</i> 	<p>Understand whether there is an enabling environment to improve farmers' access to markets</p> <p>Identify constraints and potentials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main crops grown in the area? Where and how are they sold? Are they sold at the farm gate through middlemen or through bulk transportation organised by farmers? Do farmers tend to store their production to sell it at the best price? Do farmers have some bargaining power to obtain the best prices for their products? Are there contract farmers in the area? • Are there physical barriers to markets (e.g., poor road networks)? Are there trade or production restrictions (e.g., trade regulation, price controls, production bans)? • Is the right infrastructure in place: energy and water infrastructure (to lower production and marketing risks)? rural roads? transportation and market infrastructure? storing and processing infrastructure? • Do local farmers have access to information on prices of products and the local level and at final consumer level; quality requirements (e.g., export markets; supermarkets), about places and best periods for selling their products, about potential buyers? About niche markets? • Are local farmers organised in farmer organizations? If so, what type of services do these extend to their members? • For each of these main crops, what were the average prices given to farmers for their production at the farm gate, and how much were these products sold in the local markets? Is there high price volatility for these crops? How do farmers access information on market prices? • What are the crops that could be grown in the project area and which would have a better marketing potential?

Sampling Methods for Sample-Based Surveys

What is the purpose of sampling?

There are two possible ways to monitor and evaluate the outcomes and impact that project interventions have on project beneficiaries: (i) monitor the changes taking place within the entire population of project beneficiaries and undertake regular census-based surveys or through participatory M&E. This is the ideal situation, but it has high cost implications. (ii) monitor and survey only a subset of project beneficiaries through sample-based surveys. These types of surveys are less costly in terms of time and financial resources and are therefore much more practical, although they require skills in sample design.

Sampling is the use of a subset of a population to represent the whole population. When proper sampling methods are used, sample-based surveys are useful to derive reliable information on project outcomes and impact, and findings from a sample of beneficiaries [(C) in Figure 1] can be inferred to the overall population of project beneficiaries (B).

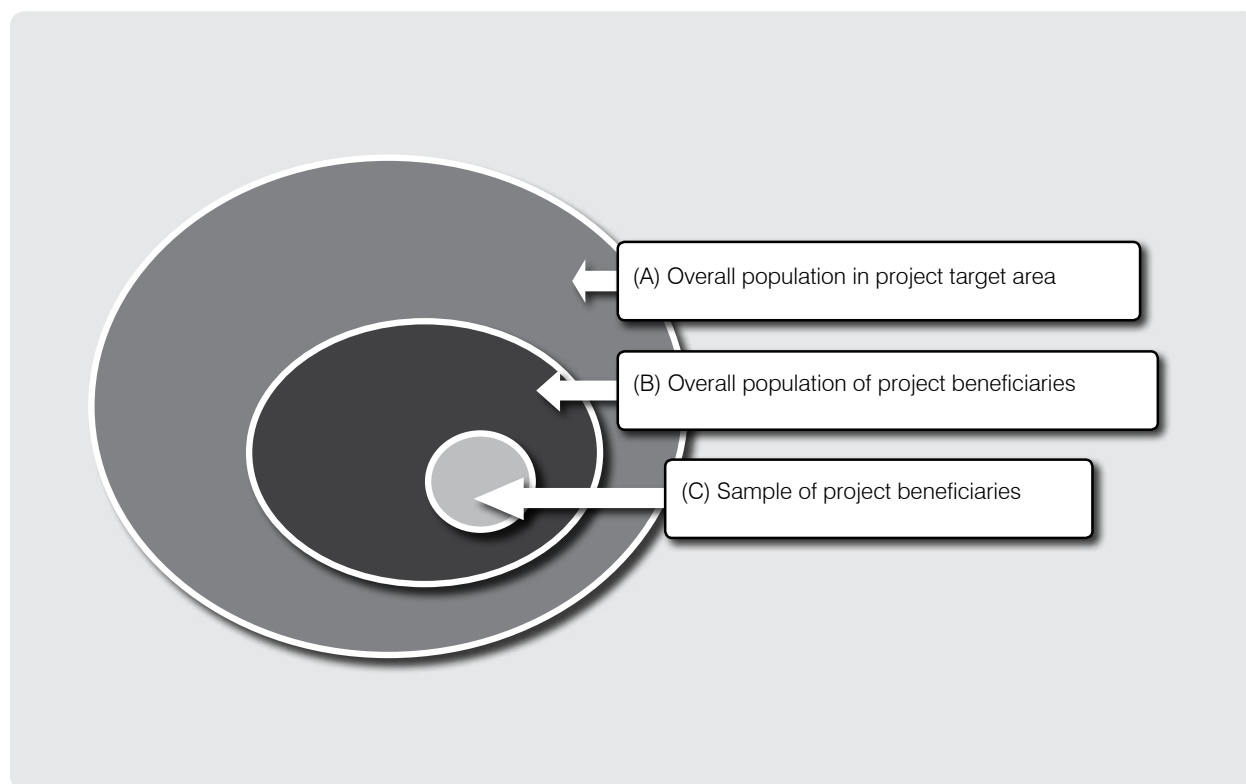


Figure 1. Beneficiary population vs. overall population in project target area

In most IFAD-funded projects, specific project interventions are targeted to specific target groups (e.g., training extended to farmers). Therefore, the total number of project beneficiaries [(B) in Figure 1] is usually smaller than the total number of persons living in the project target area [(A) in Figure 1]. In rare cases, project interventions may benefit the entire population in a given village (e.g., in the case of a local road newly constructed that will benefit the entire populations of villages situated near this road).

Choosing the appropriate sampling method

The first step, when undertaking a survey, is to identify the best sampling method. Among the various sampling methods that exist, the following two methods are recommended for IFAD-funded projects:

RANDOM SAMPLING (also called probability sampling): with the use of these methods, each member of a target population has an equal probability of selection. This avoids bias in the selection of survey respondents. Findings from a random sample can be used to represent the overall population with a known margin of error. The types of random sampling methods recommended for IFAD projects include the following:

Simple random sampling: Used when the overall population has no distinct characteristic and is homogeneous and when the overall population is not too widely dispersed. The random selected sample of beneficiaries will be representative of the overall beneficiary population.

Stratified sampling: Used to increase survey precision and reduce the margin of error when the overall population of project beneficiaries includes specific subgroups¹ or strata² with very distinct, mutually exclusive socioeconomic characteristics. Stratified sampling involves the process of dividing members of the population into homogeneous subgroups before sampling. Once subgroups/strata are identified, random sampling is applied within each subgroup.

Cluster sampling: Used to reduce survey costs when the overall beneficiary population can be easily divided, like in stratified sampling, into “natural” sub-groups³, with those groups becoming the primary sampling unit (as opposed to individuals being the primary sampling unit as in stratified sampling of random sampling). A random sampling technique is then used to choose which clusters to include in the study of randomly selecting the clusters which will be surveyed, then randomly selecting the individuals within these selected clusters.

One version of cluster sampling is **area sampling** or **geographical cluster sampling**, where clusters consist of geographical areas. This method is recommended for geographically dispersed populations that are too expensive to survey. This type of a survey helps concentrate survey efforts to a reduced number of geographic areas because all members of selected groups will be surveyed.

¹ For example: (a) 40% of project beneficiaries are livestock owners who own 10 cattle or more and 60% are landless households with no cattle; or (b) 70% of the project beneficiaries live in lowland, irrigated areas and 30 % live in highland, dry areas.

² For example: (a) 30% of project beneficiaries are classified as ultra-poor, 50% poor and 20% better off; or (b) targeted beneficiaries are 80% women borrowers and 20% male borrowers.

³ For example: Groups of individual beneficiaries organized in Farmers' Groups or Women Groups.

Stratified, cluster sampling: Cluster sampling may be combined with stratified sampling when the beneficiary population includes subgroups/strata with distinct socioeconomic characteristics of individuals who can also be organised in clusters. This method combines both benefits of stratified sampling and cluster sampling, thus increasing precision while reducing costs (by increasing sampling efficiency.)

NON-RANDOM SAMPLING (also called non-probability sampling): With these methods, only some members of the beneficiary population have a chance of selection, while others will be excluded *a priori* from participation in the survey. Such methods are usually used to save time, but they do not allow the estimation of sampling errors. This means that information gathered through non-random samples cannot be extrapolated to the overall population of beneficiaries or that any generalisations obtained from a non-random sample must be filtered through one's knowledge of the topic being studied. The types of non-random sampling methods recommended for IFAD projects include the following:

Convenience sampling (also called accidental sampling): This involves drawing the sample from a population that is easy to reach or close at hand. This method is often used during IFAD supervision missions, with mission members collecting information from beneficiaries who are easy to reach (e.g., they live near the road or in the villages visited by the mission).

Purposive sampling (also called judgmental sampling): Purposive sampling involves choosing the sample based on the best judgment on who would be appropriate for the study. Examples include key informant interviews, where a limited number of respondents is chosen from people who are assumed to have expertise in area being studied.

Determining the appropriate sample size

The sample size for a survey depends on the desired level of precision for survey findings, precision being defined by the confidence interval (or margin of error) that one is willing to tolerate in the survey, given the chosen confidence level (most researchers using a 95% confidence level).

➔ *For example: Using a 95% confidence level, if it is found that 55% of the sample of interviewed project beneficiaries are satisfied with project interventions and if the margin of error (or confidence interval) is $\pm 5\%$, it means that we can be 95% confident that between 50% and 60% of the overall beneficiary population is satisfied with project interventions.*

The larger the sample, the more precise the findings will be. However, surveying large samples will be more costly and time-consuming to organise.

Within IFAD-funded projects and for projects that do not feel confident about getting the most appropriate sample size, the two following standard sampling methods and sample sizes are recommended:

RIMS impact surveys: The recommended method is geographic cluster sampling, with a standard sample size of 900 households (30 randomly selected area-based clusters, with 30 randomly selected households per cluster).

RIMS+ surveys: Same as above, as the RIMS+ survey is to be conducted at the same time that the standard RIMS survey is done (*here, the same household will be asked two sets of questions: questions from the standard RIMS questionnaire and questions from the project-specific RIMS+ questionnaire*).

Annual outcome surveys: The recommended sample size is 200 households, so that the survey is less costly and time-consuming to conduct. Each project shall choose the more appropriate random sampling method for the selection of these 200 households. In addition, non-random sampling methods can be used for the selection of participants in focus group discussions and key informant interviews. For projects confident of calculating their own sample size (for example if it is assumed that a 900 household sample size is too large), the Internet has many websites that will help calculate the ideal sample size (e.g., <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>).

While the manual IFAD RIMS Practical Guidance for Impact Surveys- Part I, available on IFAD Website (<http://www.ifad.org/operations/rims/index.htm>) offers a step-by-step approach for producing RIMS and RIMS+ samples, Technical Guidance 2 provides a step-by-step approach for producing annual outcome survey samples.

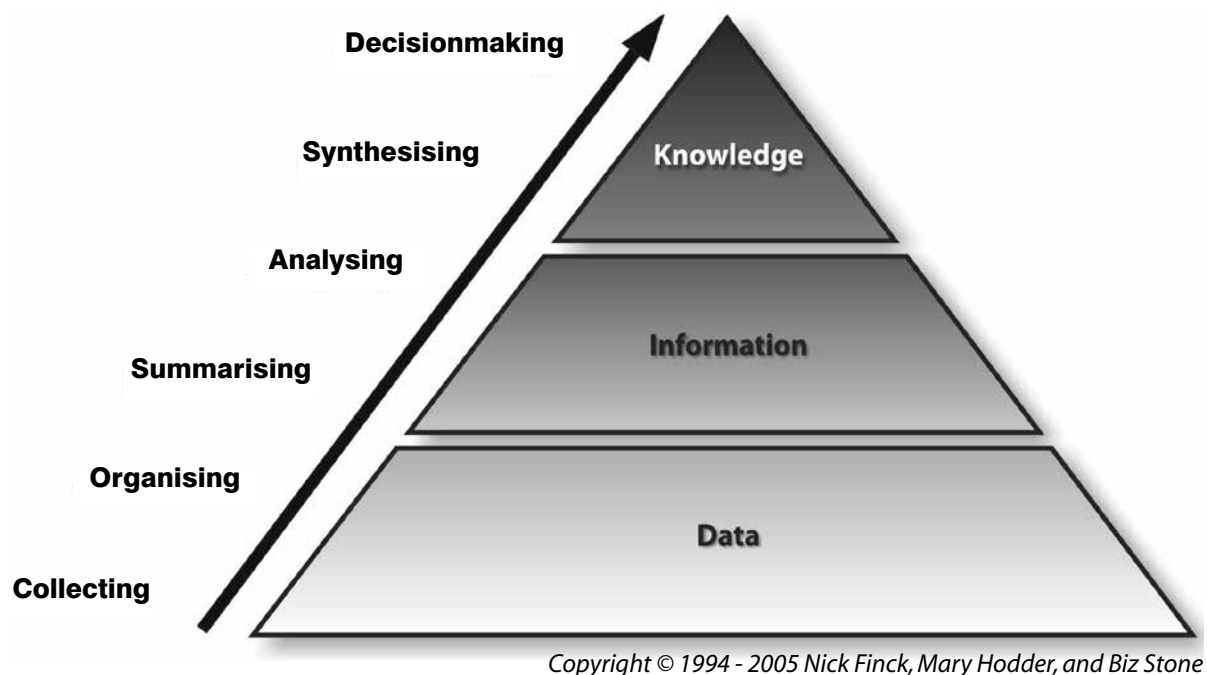
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Technical Guidelines # 5, Monitoring and Evaluation, Knowledge Management, A Tool Kit for Project Staff, Asia Pacific Division, IFAD, Rome.

Acronyms and abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RIMS+	Results and Impact Management System Plus

Using Monitoring and Evaluation to Generate Knowledge



Through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities, a large amount of quantitative and qualitative information is collected and analysed. Over time, useful knowledge on what works and what does not is generated. This knowledge should be used both internally (e.g., to improve project performance) and externally (by communicating findings and lessons learned to stakeholders and a wider audience).

Knowledge management (KM) is often perceived as an activity separate from daily project management operations, and project managers and officers often view it as a drain on their time and resources. It is important to dispel this misconception. KM is about 'learning and applying knowledge' in a way that becomes part of the daily routine. It should be incorporated into every stage of the project cycle, including M&E, planning, financial management, supervision and human resources.

“Over time, useful knowledge on what works and what does not is generated through M&E activities”

Concepts

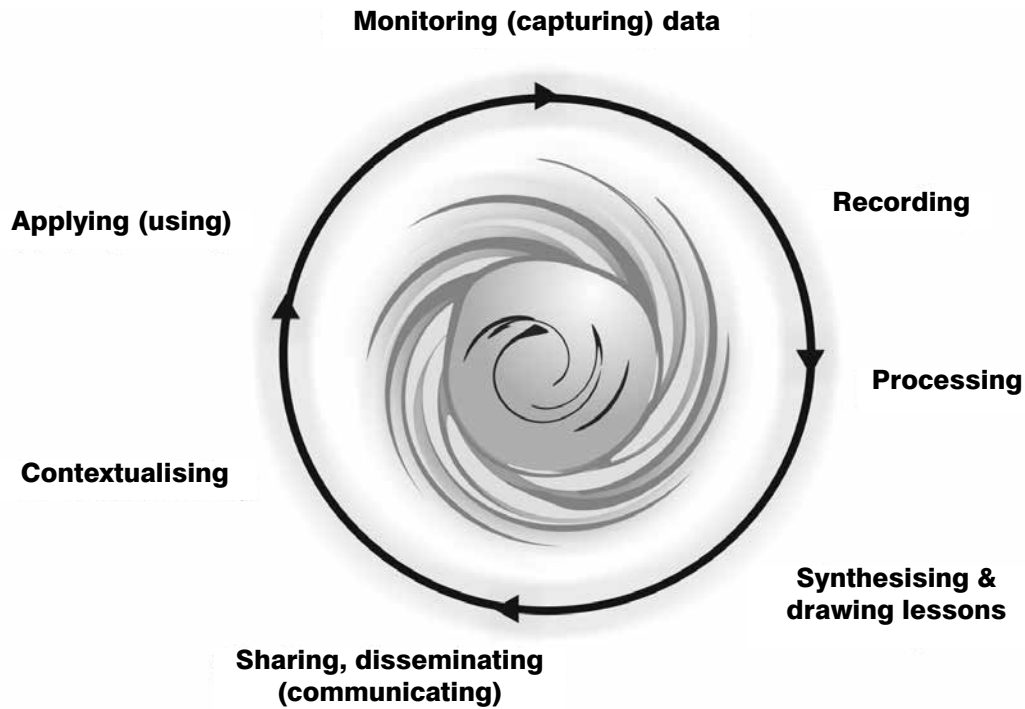
According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, **information** refers to facts provided or learned about something or someone. Information needs to be managed well, so that it can be used to generate knowledge. To start this process, first we need to identify the information required that are embedded in the project logical framework, design documents or the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS). The M&E system allows us to acquire and analyse the needed information. Information also needs to be organised and stored in a common information platform, such as a database, which should be easily accessible. It should be shared with relevant stakeholders through tools such as reports, newsletters, emails and websites. Finally, information should be used in various activities during design, implementation and completion review processes.

Knowledge is about what you know, how you know it, what difference it makes in your life and how you 'manage' it. Because of many definitions, people tend to get confused when trying to distinguish between 'information' and 'knowledge'. For example, knowledge has been defined as 'information in action.' It is 'information that changes something or somebody—either by becoming grounds for action or by making an individual (or an institution) capable of different or more effective action.' When information is applied to doing something it becomes knowledge. This definition, although valid, has one major weakness: It does not acknowledge that knowledge is a human creation—i.e., a social construct. Knowledge workers evaluate, analyse and adapt knowledge to their own material, political and social conditions. Thus, the development of knowledge is a process. This process of questioning and reflection on the information and knowledge leads to the creation of finished knowledge products.

Knowledge management (KM) is the facilitation of the processes by which knowledge is created, shared and used. It is about changing the way everyone works, which requires changing people's behaviours and work patterns. KM is essentially about people—how they create, share and use knowledge. Thus, KM programmes should have both a 'collecting' and a 'connecting' dimension. The collecting dimension involves linking people with information, by capturing and disseminating explicit knowledge. The connecting dimension involves linking people with people, specifically people who need to know with those who do know. The flow of tacit knowledge is enhanced through better human interaction and communication processes, so that knowledge is widely disseminated and not just held in the heads of a few. KM is an approach that focuses on **learning** (acquiring knowledge), **sharing** (communicating) and **helping people** acquire knowledge. Once this knowledge has been acquired, it can be documented (reports, case studies), recorded (in a common database), analysed (what worked and what did not), communicated (shared with others) and applied (used in our work).

The knowledge cycle: a way to manage knowledge

Knowledge can be viewed as a cycle (see figure). At each stage of the cycle, value is added to the knowledge generated in the context of project activities, which can be disseminated to a large number of stakeholders. Throughout the process, continuous training should be provided to project staff to enhance their capacities in consolidating grassroots and national data as well as in analysing results, reporting and sharing.



Why does KM matter?

- Work effectiveness can be increased, for example, through problem solving.
- Project performance can improve as lessons are documented and the same mistakes are not repeated.
- Funds can be used more strategically as new partnerships are formed and the 'wheel' does not have to be reinvented, as we (and our stakeholders) learn from the experience.
- New ideas and solutions can lead to more innovation, more outside-the-box thinking.
- Opportunities to learn through interactions with peers, such as the scaling up of innovations, will not be lost.
- Stakeholders will be better informed about project activities and results and will be more likely to take action.
- Policy decisions will be taken based on sound evidence.

But there are also challenges

- Lack of clarity in understanding the basic terms—data, information, knowledge, KM.
- Faulty perception—project staff are not aware of the benefits of KM because they see KM as a separate activity (sometimes even as a burden).
- Complexity—multiple actors have their own views, interests, values and development agendas.

- Various methodologies—variety of and gaps among approaches and tools for collecting data, measuring and assessing impact.
- Lack of reliability of data generated by the M&E system.
- Lack of critical reflection during data analyses to assess changes and trends.
- Poor quality of reporting, process of documentation and processing of information.
- Unclear functions—M&E officers versus KM officers.
- Operations—using M&E to add value to information the system generates to acquire knowledge.

Why share M&E findings?

The knowledge generated through M&E/KM processes should lead to the following:

- Evidence-based learning by documenting and sharing experiences.
- Taking decisions and ensuring they feed back into the project annual work plan and budget and are implemented.
- Supporting the project by adjusting actions to the realities in the field.
- Providing lessons to be used in new project designs.
- Informing policymakers as a basis for planning and taking policy decisions.
- Improving strategies for poverty reduction through accurate information on the status of the project.
- Building and enhancing partnerships as the development community is informed about the results of the programme.

So while M&E is often seen as monitoring progress and evaluating and reporting results against the project objectives, there is a need to go that 'extra mile' and reflect critically on the impact—what worked, what did not and why? What are the reasons behind these results? What are we going to do next? This should be a basis for generating lessons that feed back to the project and inform a wider audience.

Reference

M&E/KM Tool kit, Asia Pacific Division, Unpublished materials. May 2011.

Acronyms and abbreviations

KM	knowledge management
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System



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USEFUL INFORMATION RESOURCES



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ON-LINE RESOURCES

My M&E: an interactive Web 2.0 platform to share knowledge on country-led M&E systems worldwide.

Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS: a news service focusing on developments in monitoring and evaluation methods relevant to development programmes with social development objectives.

Green Accounting: A Virtual Resource Center: this centre provides a searchable database of various materials and Internet links related to integrated environmental and economic accounting, also known as green accounting. It supports the objectives and programme of work of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEE). The database is organised in five categories: Frameworks, Research Papers, Case Studies, Other Materials and Related Links.

Center for Story-based Strategy (CSS) / Tools and Worksheets section: CSS is a national movement-building organization dedicated to harnessing the power of narrative for social change.

Participatory Methods: this site provides resources on a range of methods for inclusive social development. Produced by the Participation, Power and Social Change Team, Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) / The Philippine Experience: the CBMS Network is part of the Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Network supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada through its Globalization, Growth and Poverty (GGP) Initiative, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The CBMS network generally aims to assist its members develop, refine and institutionalize community-based monitoring systems in developing countries, and to promote CBMS knowledge and initiatives internationally. Furthermore, the Network promotes evidence-based policymaking, program design and implementation while empowering local communities to participate in the process.

The Evaluation Conclave 2013 / Videos: the theme of the Second Conclave is “Evaluation for Development” emphasizing that evaluation should ultimately make a difference in the lives of people. Evaluation is particularly critical in the context of South Asia, home to complex social structures, high rates of poverty, gender discrimination, dynamic forces of globalization sweeping traditional societies and numerous development projects for the large populations of this region. Innovative evaluation approaches and practices are particularly important in such complex contexts.

IFAD President’s Bulletin - 5 June 2012: Financing Administration Manual (FAM)

Drawing from years of field-based testing and experience, *Measuring Change* is a source for innovative applications and creative adaptations of monitoring and evaluation practices from IFAD's Asia and the Pacific region.

Measuring Change includes rich case studies of IFAD's most widely used methodologies like the Results and Impact Management System and the Annual Outcome Survey. It also casts the net wider, capturing knowledge on how to use complimentary methods like Most Significant Change stories and participatory M&E approaches.

This practitioner-to-practitioner guide includes nearly 30 accounts of field-tested M&E experiences as well as practical articles and technical guidelines on planning for and implementing M&E within a results-based framework.

Measuring Change offers valuable lessons, strategies, practices and technical advice that can provide inspiration, ideas and solutions for M&E field staff around the world.

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