

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT AND COMMUNITY
SUPPORT
(CAPECS)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION MANUAL

APRIL, 2021

INTRODUCTION

This manual shows the key principles of the CAPECS monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system. The principles are aimed to ensure (a) alignment with results-based management; (b) promotion of evaluative knowledge and learning around outcomes, and (c) simplification. The manual further highlights the rationale for result-oriented monitoring and evaluation, as well as its practical application. To support CAPECS's strategic shift towards results, monitoring and evaluation must provide a strong base learning and performance measurement.

The M&E Unit is expected to monitor progress toward achievement of results systematically; to report on those results annually and to integrate lessons learned into management decisions and future programming initiatives. The role of the office management becomes more important – in terms of strategic planning and choice of monitoring and evaluation approaches and follow-up. In particular, the M&E Officer will be expected to provide active leadership to all processes towards monitoring, learning and evaluation for results.

The focus of development interventions must be centered on outcomes – realistic and positive changes in specific development conditions. By focusing on outcomes, CAPECS tries to aim for life-changing results.

The M & E system provides a clear path for key actors (management; programme leaders etc) to assess performance at all levels of programming, with regard to:

- (a) the progress towards outcomes;
- (b) the contribution of CAPECS to the outcomes through outputs (generated by projects, policy advice, advocacy and other activities); and
- (c) the partnership strategy.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For purposes of simplicity, CAPECS will follow good practices when it comes to: (1) *scope* and (2) *conduct* of monitoring and evaluation. Within these principles, the M&E Unit determines tools, formats, timing, and schedules, ensuring that M & E serves as input to the management team and partners in helping them to manage for results.

Scope

The essential thing is focus on results. All monitoring and evaluation efforts would address:

- a. Progress towards outcomes.
- b. Contribution of CAPECS towards outcomes.
- c. Partnership strategy to produce the outcomes.

Conduct

The credibility of M & E findings depends to a large extent on the manner in which they are conducted. For CAPECS, the following represents good monitoring and evaluation:

- (a) Focus on progress towards intended results and follow-up with decisions and action;
- (b) Regular dissemination of information from monitoring results with management and partners presenting issues and seeking solutions to problems, as a basis for analysis;
- (c) Use of participatory monitoring mechanisms to ensure commitment, ownership, and follow-up and feedback on performance;
- (d) Use of indicators and making efforts in improving the performance measurement systems and developing baselines at all programming levels;
- (e) Actively learning and improving to adapt strategies and generating lessons and sharing them;
- (f) Active planning, conduct and use of evaluations of intended outcomes for validation of results, as well as initiative to undertake additional evaluations when necessary.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All partners have a role to play in monitoring and evaluation, though their specific perspective and responsibilities differ. General responsibilities are; the CAPECS

management will be expected to be more closely involved in strategic choice of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This would include the selection of outcomes to evaluate reflections in evaluation plan.

In close partnership with key stakeholders, with particular attention to the funding and coordinating agencies, their role is to ensure that the programme developed contributes as best as possible to the attainment of the goals of the organization. This supposes an active leadership of the monitoring and evaluation officer and annual assessment, advocacy and partnership strategy development, and of encouraging the move towards better monitoring and evaluation for results and a learning environment.

In general, the management sets the framework for managing for results, prioritization in work planning and partnerships. One key deliverable is the follow-up to evaluations through the development of a management response and its implementation. Together with partners, they also ensure periodic assessments whether the approach followed is the best way of producing the intended outcomes to ensure that effective and efficient progress is being made.

The CAPECS management including Monitoring and evaluation officer will remain responsible for the overall monitoring of the production of strategic outputs as well as monitoring progress towards outcome. They take on a greater role in advocacy and partnership building. With the management level of the office, their deliverables include outcome evaluations, for which Programme Leaders bring together an analysis of several projects, activities and data based on an annual performance assessment and help generate lessons learned around outcomes.

These staff may also add value to project work and provide soft assistance to exercise a positive influence on the outputs. It is also expected that their role in programme design is strong in order to ensure alignment with strategic priorities. At this phase, they help develop accountability mechanisms and, through them, monitor periodically to ensure that CAPECS's resources are being used appropriately and to liberate time for analysis of results.

The project management will remain responsible for delivering the outputs of the projects, the actual implementation, input management and sound administrative management. A key task is the monitoring of implementation tasks by other contractors. The project staff will also develop the project work plan and the annual project report to the head office, thus providing critical information and lessons learned regarding the effectiveness of the implementation strategy and the delivery of outputs.

PLANNING MONITORING & EVALUATION

Under the M & E framework, offices cannot mechanically follow detailed and prescriptive procedures, but rather will need to design monitoring and evaluation based on the specific needs of the office, partners, project or outcome. Thus the planning of monitoring and evaluation becomes more important for CAPECS and its stakeholders, as integral parts of the organizations overall work.

To determine appropriate tools that allow both for assessing progress towards outcomes and the project contributions, offices would need to look at all the projects and programmes intended to contribute to any intended outcome including the nature of those interventions. For example, an outcome to enhance livelihoods at the village level may require more participatory monitoring approaches than an outcome requiring a high degree of policy advice, for which the monitoring should include a means of following the policy formulation process in the country. An outcome at regional or global level may require more frequent reporting because the countries involved are spread out.

Planning of Evaluations

This begins as early as the formulation stage and is subsequently kept up to date continuously, annually or periodically depending on local needs and as plans become more concrete and programmes evolve. Such planning helps to make strategic and selective decisions about what to evaluate, when and why. Planning therefore takes account of expected use of the evaluation for programming and policy improvement.

All offices will prepare a mandatory evaluation plan within the first quarter of each project implementation. The preparation of the Evaluation Plan will figure as a key element for performance assessment of CAPECS. CAPECS will use the plan to ensure that evaluation activities are on track.

Monitoring

Until now, monitoring and evaluation have been traditionally situated at the individual project level. Success was defined by timely implementation and on meeting project objectives. In a results-based environment, however, projects remain a key vehicle of development assistance, but their success is marked by measurable contributions to outcomes.

The purpose of monitoring is to ensure the systematic assessment of performance and progress of CAPECS interventions toward achievement of outcomes at project level. In practice, monitoring assesses the performance and progress of projects, programmes, partnerships and assistance outcomes. The scope of monitoring is now therefore wider than just looking at what projects deliver. Information from monitoring provides the basis for making decisions and taking action. As such, it supports immediate decision-making needs more than it contributes to long-term knowledge building.

Under management, monitoring becomes even more important as a tool for decision-making and learning and is indispensable in providing information and data for evaluations. Furthermore, the head office now has the possibility to make monitoring more coherent and build ownership since it deals with the same results across all programming instruments.

At each programming level, the partners will focus increasingly on higher level results, i.e. project reporting primarily on outputs; some are looking more at outcomes; others level aiming at goals and Millennium Development Targets. The monitoring tools applied should match the needs at each level. Monitoring of outcomes may require a different mix of tools than the tools traditionally used at project level, for example through review, analysis or surveys rather than field visits or tripartite/bi-lateral meetings.

Within a framework focused on progress towards outcomes and CAPECS's contribution to them, the CAPECS M & E Officer has to determine the right mix of monitoring tools and approaches for each project, programme or outcome, ensuring that the monitoring contains an appropriate balance following three characteristics:

- a. **Reporting** - obtaining and analyzing documentation from the project that provides information on progress. For example: Annual Project report (APR), progress report, quarterly report, work plan, and annual organizational report.
- b. **Validation** - checking or verifying whether the reported progress is accurate or not. For example: Field visits, spot-check visits, external assessment, client survey, evaluation; and
- c. **Participation** - obtaining feedback from partners and beneficiaries on progress and proposed actions. For example: Outcome groups, steering committee/mechanism, stakeholder meeting, focus group meetings and annual review.

Review of annual organizational reports will remain the centerpiece of performance monitoring and reporting. This should be prepared based on a highly consultative annual review exercise that connects reporting, feedback, evaluation and learning to assess performance. The organization of such a review is fully decentralized and must be adapted to local conditions, balancing the ideal comprehensive review with added value and low transaction cost. Taking place in time to feed into the annual review, may take the form of *one* meeting where there are relatively few key partners; a series of meetings; wide range of stakeholders or select partners; and be comprehensive or deal with key issues only. What is essential is that the review is prepared from analysis based on consultations with partners. There are no formats or reports prescribed for such a review. The annual review is mandatory.

Monitoring tools

- Regular field visits is a key instrument for validation of results as reported by projects, in particular for larger, key projects that are essential. Visits may increasingly be joint and/or concern clusters of projects within an outcome - with a view to rigorously analyze results.
- While the focus of monitoring looks toward outcomes, Programme Directors will still need to monitor aspects of implementation at project level for accountability purposes. The regular interactions with Project staff and stakeholders should provide sufficient detail on implementation problems, activities, inputs and resource expenditure. Nevertheless, monitoring cannot effectively solve more permanent problems of weak management or accountability. Capacity assessments, good project design and early agreement on standards for management are crucial.

Evaluation

Evaluations at all levels have so far been limited to projects and programmes; the scope being to evaluate if objectives in the project document were reached. The focus on accountability should often be seen not as a judgment, but used for improving performance and policy decisions. Project evaluations could be useful where they provided answers to help decision-making mid-way, but often they do not have a great effect on learning beyond the project evaluated.

Performance cannot be viewed exclusively in terms of the achievement of project objectives; one must also focus on the greater effect of assistance on people's lives within a certain development context. Henceforth, CAPECS will focus on evaluating its

interventions at the level of outcomes rather than inputs and outputs, because this level reveals more about how effective CAPECS's actions are in reaping real change by adding value to life. This level, moreover, promises a shorter timeframe and more credible linkages between CAPECS's actions and an eventual effect, than does the level of much longer-term and diffuse impacts.

Selection of Outcomes for Evaluation

Evaluation is key in ensuring accountability by credibility of results and validation of reporting; by providing an independent, neutral and fact-based perspective; by analyzing problems in-depth to help decisions; by generating tools that can be used to build consensus and for learning. Head offices will therefore be expected to conduct a limited number of outcome evaluations during the project cycle, depending on total resources estimated to be available to the office during the project cycle; taking account of previous evaluation workload and the need to validate results on a "sample" basis. A separate memo from the M & E Officer will provide the number of expected outcome evaluations per office per project cycle (ranging from 1 to 6 or more). These evaluations will cover a number of activities associated with the outcome.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT: RATING SYSTEM

Ultimately, monitoring and evaluation aim to ensure and assess success and learning from successes and mistakes. To improve CAPECS performance measurement system, the project success rating system (in the evaluations) and the results will be aligned, i.e. the performance of CAPECS projects will be rated by the degree of their contributions toward progress and achievement. Under this regime, if an office does not submit an evaluation plan as required, compliance rate will be recorded as zero.

Outcomes and outputs

A common rating system would permit performance comparisons across results, whether such comparisons are done by thematic category. The results rating system apply to:

- a. The evaluation will rate outcome and output progress.
- b. Evaluations will rate outcome and output progress, as well as other select performance elements (such as sustainability, relevance, funding, capacity etc.). The rating will be made by independent assessment teams as part of the evaluation report, periodically when outcome evaluations are taking place. The ratings will be used for trend analysis and lessons learned corporately, as well as

- for validation purposes of project-level results and reviews of development effectiveness.
- c. Select monitoring reports will rate outcome and output progress for projects, on a voluntary basis.

SUPPORT

The M&E unit will be assisted by the management of CAPECS in the introduction of the M & E framework. Furthermore, the M & E unit will ensure feedback and synthesis of evaluations to enhance CAPECS development effectiveness.