



Managing for Impact in Rural Development

A Guide for Project M&E

Credits

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ISBN

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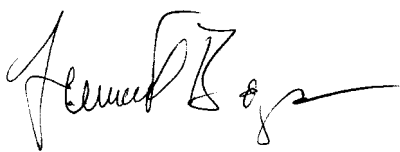
Foreword

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and its partners in developing countries share the challenging mission of enabling the rural poor to overcome their poverty. A partnership which takes shape primarily through hundreds of rural development projects and programmes at grass-roots level, often in the poorest and most remote regions of the world.

Although the performance of these projects has improved in many aspects over the years, external evaluations continue to report weaknesses in their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, in particular in the way impact M&E is carried out and used at project management and policy level. The need for support is also evident from the numerous requests that IFAD receives each year from its partners for assistance in M&E system design and operation.

In line with the IFAD Action Plan 2000-2002, which seeks to “improve impact assessment”, this new practical guide was developed through a yearlong consultative process with its potential users: project M&E officers, managers, designers and supervisors. Its purpose is to facilitate the development and use of effective and participatory M&E systems as tools for impact-oriented management, shared learning processes and accountability.

As such, it is an integral part of our global effort to improve the performance and monitor the results of our common initiatives to strengthen the capacity of the rural poor and their organisations, improve equitable access to productive resources and increase access to financial services and markets.



Lennart Båge

President
International Fund for Agricultural Development

Preface

After a long consultation process and much work by a variety of M&E specialists from all regions of IFAD operations, I am pleased to present the IFAD Practical Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development Projects.

The process began in 2000 when the Fund's Office of Evaluation and Studies conducted a stocktaking exercise, which covered a decade of IFAD experience with M&E at project level. After which, a comparative review was undertaken of the strategies and approaches to M&E systems at project level of several major development agencies. While the stocktaking exercise observed a general weakness in most M&E systems, the comparative review concluded that there is substantial material on M&E concepts and theories, although there remains a lack of practical resource kits on the methodologies and processes at operational level.

As such, the overriding goal of the guide is to improve the impact of IFAD-funded projects, through the introduction of effective M&E systems. It focuses on a learning approach to management that uses achievements and problems to improve decision-making and accountability. This requires creating an M&E system that helps primary stakeholders, implementing partners and project staff to learn together in order to improve their development interventions on a continual basis. As the ultimate objective is to ensure the maximum possible benefit for the rural poor, they are the ones best placed to assess project impact and must therefore be considered full partners in any future M&E. The guide also suggests ideas for implementing this and other forms of participatory M&E.

The primary target audience is composed of staff from project management units, in particular project directors and M&E officers, together with their implementation partners, such as, public services, NGOs and CBOs. The guide is also aimed at technical consultants and supervisors from co-operating institutions. Because the effectiveness of M&E systems also depends on the decisions taken during project design, specific sections of the guide provide advice to project designers, including IFAD staff and their consultants.

This guide presents a number of original features that I believe could contribute to its success and usefulness:

- It has been developed together with its potential users through a consultative process lasting over a year. It addresses their practical problems, starting from their current M&E practices, however rudimentary, and whenever possible uses examples of good practices from IFAD-funded and other rural development projects.
- The guide is geared to the specific context, procedures and partnerships of IFAD supported operations. It emphasises participatory processes throughout, and proposes options that can be adapted to the requirements of project managements in different regional and national contexts.
- The guide is organised in eight stand-alone modules that are tailored to the needs of different categories of users with specific yet differing monitoring responsibilities and tasks.
- The guide is also available to the public in a user-friendly, electronic format on the IFAD web page (www.ifad.org/evaluation).

Furthermore, the guide is not a stand-alone initiative. In fact, it forms part of broader spectrum of activities which include, more specifically, improvement of the logical framework approaches in project design and supervision, training, translation of the guide into local languages and the development of regional M&E support networks which take stock of IFAD's experience with the PREVAL (Programme for Strengthening the M&E Capacity of IFAD-funded Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean). This regional customisation should further adapt the contents of the guide to the needs of its users and their feedback will be incorporated in future versions.

I trust that the guide will be a valuable tool and contribution to the enhancement of impact assessment and achievement in IFAD-supported projects.



Luciano Lavizzari

Director
Office of Evaluation and Studies

Navigating the Guide

Manager		
<i>Are you responsible for managing the project or a project component?</i>		
<i>Phase in Project Cycle</i>	<i>Tasks You Face</i>	<i>Section Number</i>
Start-up	Revising the project design (logical framework)	Section 3, Annex B
	Obtaining an overview of M&E responsibilities	Section 2
	Supervising development of the M&E system	Section 5, Annex C
	Using the logical framework as a basis for developing the annual work plan and budget	Section 3
	Ensuring M&E staff have sufficient resources, capacities and structures to develop and implement the M&E system	Section 7, Annex E
Implementation	Requesting and using M&E information to guide project implementation and make decisions	Sections 2 and 8
	Supervising the contributions and performance of staff, partners and consultants	Section 4, Annex E
	Engaging team members, primary stakeholders and partners in joint analysis, learning and decision making	Section 8

M&E staff (project or partners)		
<i>Are you responsible for ensuring that M&E in the project as a whole or in a project component is being set up and implemented well?</i>		
<i>Phase in Project Cycle</i>	<i>Tasks You Face</i>	<i>Section Number</i>
Start-up	Developing clarity about the role of M&E in project management	Section 2
	Ensuring that during revision of project design, the M&E system and procedures are detailed enough for implementation	Sections 3 and 4
	Guiding project implementers in agreeing what to monitor and evaluate	Section 5, Annex C
	Guiding project implementers in deciding how to collect and communicate information	Section 6, Annex D
	Checking that proposed resources, capacities, support and structures are sufficient for M&E to be effective	Section 7, Annex E
Implementation	Supporting partners and consultants in fulfilling their M&E responsibilities	Section 4
	Encouraging reflective use of information by implementers	Section 8
	Engaging key stakeholders in joint analysis of information	Section 8
	Reporting findings from M&E	Section 6

Consultants

Are you responsible for providing external technical assistance in the areas of project design, M&E and information management for the project or a project component?

<i>Phase in Project Cycle</i>	<i>Tasks You Face</i>	<i>Section Number</i>
Design	Ensuring that the proposed project design is based on good design practice	Section 3, Annex B
	Ensuring that the M&E component has been designed comprehensively enough and with sufficient resources, capacities and flexibility	Sections 4 and 7
Start-up	Ensuring that the M&E system is designed to support “managing for impact”	Sections 2 and 4
	Supporting M&E staff in developing appropriate monitoring mechanisms	Sections 5 and 6
	Ensuring that enough and appropriate resources, capacities and support structures exist for carrying out M&E responsibilities	Section 7
Implementation	Building critical reflection into M&E processes	Section 8
	Reviewing and updating the M&E system	Sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

IFAD and Cooperating Institution staff

Are you responsible for providing guidance, supervision and support to the project?

<i>Phase in Project Cycle</i>	<i>Tasks You Face</i>	<i>Section Number</i>
Design	Checking that the proposed project design meets “good practice” standards	Section 3, Annex B
	Stipulating relevant elements of learning-oriented M&E in job descriptions and terms of reference	Annex E
	Ensuring that the proposed project design includes sufficient resources, capacities and enabling support structures for M&E	Section 7
Start-up	Ensuring that the project design is being revised appropriately with sufficient detail to M&E	Section 3
	Encouraging impact-focused monitoring	Section 5
Implementation	Ensuring that key aspects of the M&E system are in place	Section 4
	Recognising if a project is taking a learning approach in its implementation	Section 8
	Checking reports and suggesting reporting formats	Sections 3 and 6

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Acronyms

APR	annual project review
AWPB	annual work plan and budget
BPL	below poverty line
CBA	cost-benefit analysis
CBO	community-based organisation
CCU	central coordination unit
CI	cooperating institution
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Paper
CPM	country portfolio manager
CV	curriculum vitae (résumé)
DC	district council
DPF	district project facilitator
DT	district team
FUG	forestry user group
GIS	geographic information system
GPS	global positioning system
HYVs	high-yielding varieties
ICGs	income-generating activities
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LFA	logical framework approach
MIS	management information system
MOVs	means of verification
MTE	mid-term evaluation
MTR	mid-term review
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MU	monitoring unit
NTCU	national technical coordination unit
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PCU	programme coordination unit
PD	project director
PIM	participatory impact monitoring
PM&E	participatory monitoring and evaluation
PMU	project management unit
PNGO	participating NGO (i.e. implementing partner)
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
SHG	self-help group
SOF	Special Operations Fund
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TA	technical assistance
TOC	table of contents

TOR	terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WB	World Bank
WUA	water users' association

Projects mentioned by name in the Guide

ADIP	Agricultural Diversification and Intensification Project	Bangladesh
APPTDP	Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project	India
	Cuchumatanes Highlands Rural Development Project	Guatemala
	District Development Project	Zambia
DDSP	District Development Support Programme	Uganda
FODESA	Sahelian Areas Development Fund Programme	Mali
KAEMP	Agricultural and Environmental Management Project	Tanzania
	Karnataka Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project	India
LACOSREP	Upper East Region Land Conservation and Smallholder Rehabilitation Project	Ghana
MARENASS	Management of Natural Resources in the Southern Highlands Project	Peru
	Maharashtra Rural Credit Project	India
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province Barani Area Development Project	Pakistan
	Northwest Agricultural Services Project	Armenia
WUPAP	Nepal Western Uplands Poverty Alleviation Development Project	Nepal
P4K	Income Generating Project for Marginal Farmers and Landless	Indonesia
PADEMER	Rural Micro-Enterprises Development Programme	Colombia
PDR-San	Income Diversification Programme in the Mali Sud Area	Mali
PIDP	Participatory Irrigation Development Project	Tanzania
PROCHALATE	Rehabilitation and Development Project of Areas Affected by Conflict in the Department of Chalatenango	El Salvador
PRODECOP	Economic Development of Poor Rural Communities Project	Venezuela
PROSALAFA	Support Project for Small Producers in the Semi-arid Zones of Falcon and Lara States	Venezuela
RADP	Raymah Area Development Project	Yemen
RDRS	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service	Bangladesh
RTIP	Root and Tuber Improvement Programme	Ghana
SAIP	Smallholder Agricultural Improvement Project	Bangladesh
SARAGURO	Yacuambi Rural Development Project	Ecuador
SDPMA	Smallholder Development Project for Marginal Areas	Tanzania
SFPD	Smallholder Flood Plains Development Project	Malawi
SISP	Smallholder Irrigation Support Programme	Zimbabwe
TEPP	Tihama Environmental Protection Project	Yemen
TROPISEC	Project for the Capitalization of Small Farmers in the TropiseC Area of the Segovias – Region 1	Nicaragua
TNWDP	Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project	India

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