

[IQEA PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION HANDBOOK]

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WHAT IS THIS HANDBOOK?

The purpose of this handbook is to promote a common understanding and reliable practice of monitoring and evaluation of international project, starting from the experience of IQEA Evo Project. Therefore, this guide is not intended to be read from cover to cover; the reader can refer to specific topics for more detail when needed.

WHY IS MONITORING AND EVALUATION IMPORTANT?

- A well-functioning M&E system is a critical part of good project management and accountability. Timely and reliable M&E provides information to:
- Support project implementation with accurate, evidence based reporting that informs management and decision-making to guide and improve project performance.
- Contribute to organizational learning and knowledge sharing by reflecting upon and sharing experiences and lessons so that we can gain the full benefit from what we do and how we do it.
- Uphold accountability and compliance by demonstrating whether or not our work has been carried out as agreed and in compliance with established standards and with any other requirements.
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback, especially beneficiaries, to provide input into and perceptions of our work, modeling openness to criticism, and willingness to learn from experiences and to adapt to changing needs.
- Promote and celebrate our work by highlighting our accomplishments and achievements, building morale and contributing to resource mobilization.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation on the project process is exercised throughout the period of project implementation. It is carried out according to the initially agreed activities in the approved application form of the project and the activity plan presented by the internal evaluator of the project in the beginning of the project implementation period.

Project developments are monitored and tools are evaluated continuously all during the project life cycle; setting up specific guidelines and instructions for the smooth implementation of the project.

EVALUATION APPROACH: BASIC AIMS AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

In general, our working approach is that evaluation activity should be a means , not an end, and part of the process of helping lead organizations and partnerships to achieve sustained project outcomes. In essence, it should facilitate a reconsideration of objectives and processes, review progress to date, and determine any course corrections that might be enacted. The evaluation work also needs to focus on purpose and process; it is as essential and important to pinpoint why initiatives are succeeding or underperforming against expectations, and how future strategies and actions can be improved. Learning from experience, adjusting for improvement and celebrating and publicizing success through dissemination, is vital. Of course, evaluation needs to include some assessment of the efficacy or otherwise of the processes whereby actions and activities were determined and implemented. This involves an assessment of the development, scope, inclusiveness, and linkages of the project.

In an endeavor to ensure high quality results from the project, the evaluation does not just focus on process and outputs but on more in-depth effects and sustainable outcomes. The stages of the work will allow for a feedback loop to evaluate the effectiveness of the materials and to feed back recommended adjustments to maximize their outcomes. This provides a basis for the valorization process.

In general, the work will take a positive and constructively critical stance. Its major objective will be to review project progress and to reflect on objectives and achievements, to feedback ideas and advise on potential improvements and adjustments during the early stages of the project, to confirm success where appropriate, and, in terms of valorization, to suggest ways forward where constraints are evident.

Diagram 1 provides an overview of the usual stages and key activities in project planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER). We write “usual” stages because there is no one generic project cycle, as each project ultimately varies according to the local context and need.

DIAGRAM 1: Key M&E activities in the project cycle



Initial needs assessment. This is done to determine whether a project is needed and, if so, to inform its planning.

Log frame and indicators. This involves the operational design of the project and its objectives, indicators, means of verification and assumptions.

M&E planning. This is the practical planning for the project to monitor and evaluate the log frame's objectives and indicators.

Baseline study. This is the measurement of the initial conditions (appropriate indicators) before the start of a project.

Midterm evaluation and/or reviews. These are important reflection events to assess and inform ongoing project implementation.

Final evaluation. This occurs after project completion to assess how well the project achieved its intended objectives and what difference this has made.

Dissemination and use of lessons. This informs ongoing programming. However, reporting, reflection and learning should occur throughout the whole project cycle, which is why these have been placed in the centre of the diagram.

WHAT IS MONITORING?

Monitoring is the routine collection and analysis of information to track progress against set plans and check compliance to established standards. It helps identify trends and patterns, adapt strategies and inform decisions for project management.

Common types of monitoring

- **Results monitoring tracks effects and impacts.** This is where monitoring merges with evaluation to determine if the project is on target towards its intended results (outputs, outcomes, impact) and whether there may be any unintended impact (positive or negative).
- **Process (activity) monitoring** tracks the use of inputs and resources, the progress of activities and the delivery of outputs. It examines how activities are delivered – the efficiency in time and resources. It is often conducted in conjunction with compliance monitoring and feeds into the evaluation of impact.
- **Compliance monitoring** ensures compliance with donor regulations and expected results, grant and contract requirements, local governmental regulations and laws, and ethical standards.
- **Context (situation) monitoring** tracks the setting in which the project operates, especially as it affects identified risks and assumptions, but also any unexpected considerations that may arise.
- **Beneficiary monitoring** tracks beneficiary perceptions of a project. It includes beneficiary satisfaction or complaints with the project, including their participation, treatment, access to resources and their overall experience of change.

- **Financial monitoring** accounts for costs by input and activity within predefined categories of expenditure. It is often conducted in conjunction with compliance and process monitoring.
- **Organizational monitoring** tracks the sustainability, institutional development and capacity building in the project and with its partners. It is often done in conjunction with the monitoring processes of the larger, implementing organization.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Common types of evaluation

- **Formative evaluations** occur during project implementation to improve performance and assess compliance.
- **Summative evaluations** occur at the end of project implementation to assess effectiveness and impact.
- **Midterm evaluations** are formative in purpose and occur midway through implementation. Typically, this does not need to be independent or external, but may be according to specific assessment needs.
- **Final evaluations** are summative in purpose and are conducted (often externally) at the completion of project implementation to assess how well the project achieved its intended objectives.

MONITORING & EVALUATION TOOLS IN IQEA EVO

Reports should be prepared for a specific purpose/audience. This informs the appropriate content, format and timing for the report. Given the different aspects to analyze in a project, our advice is to write 3 evaluation reports, collecting the partners' and stakeholders evaluation. In IQEA Evo project the reports were based on the following issues:

I. First Evaluation Report:

- Difficulties and opportunities to define caregiver profile;
- Difficulties and solutions adopted for the definition of educational profiles and study plan for caregiver;
- Difficulties and solutions adopted on the definition of standards of quality for the delivery of training;
- Difficulties and solutions adopted on the definition of procedure to assess the learning.

ECVET Partnership Agreement:

- Was the definition of the tool difficult?
- Were the contents shared by all partners?
- Will it be an useful tool for enhancing workers mobility?
- Are the learning units coherent with the learning models of your country? Which are the main differences?

II. Interim Evaluation Report:

Monitoring on training for trainers and for final beneficiaries (out. 12 e 13)

- Features of candidates for the training courses and general statistics;
- Trainees completing planned paths;
- Trainees satisfaction assessment;
- Skills obtained from training paths;

- Partners will be interviewed on social policies and background analyses related to the courses.

III. Final Evaluation Report:

Monitoring related to mainstreaming phase and capitalization

- Has the project determined the development of new policies at local, regional or national level?
- Has the project improve the development of policies already existing at local, regional or national level?
- Will the project continue after the end of the project? How?
- What decision makers have been involved so far? How?
- What decisions makers have you planned to involve? How?
- Was the ECVET agreement signed by local, regional or national authorities?
- Will the ECVET agreement be signed by local, regional or national authorities?
- How is your general evaluation of IQEA project
- Is the quality of the project tools satisfying?

INDICATORS

An indicator is a unit of measurement that helps determine what progress is being made towards the achievement of an intended result (objective).

Different types of indicators

Impact indicators: Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement or reflect changes connected to the **goals**, the long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention.

Outcome indicators: connected to the stated **outcomes**, the primary results that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes or practices of the target group.

Output indicators: connected to the stated **outputs**, the tangible products, goods and services and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes.

Process indicators: connected to the stated activities, the collection of tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the outputs.

IQEA EVO INDICATORS

CORRECTNESS	COMPLETENESS	The degree to which IQEA EVO guarantees full implementation of foreseen activities
	CONSISTENCY	The degree to which IQEA EVO model provides consistent tools for implementation of processes
	ACCURACY	The degree to which IQEA EVO project matches the required number of outputs
	FLEXIBILITY	The extent to which IQEA EVO model maintains an audit trail able to adopt modification coherent with its objectives, scopes and nature
EFFICIENCY	EFFECTIVENESS	The degree to which IQEA EVO utilizes minimal resources (e.g., processing time) in performing model functions
TRANSFERABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY	INNOVATIVITY	The degree to which IQEA EVO improves knowledge and available data;
	NETWORKING	The ability of IQEA EVO to exchange information with stakeholders, policy makers and training organizations and to mutually use the information that has been exchanged
PRESENTABILITY	IMAGE	The degree to which IQEA EVO provides a consistent, attractive identity which is understood by all users
	PENETRATION	The extent to which IQEA EVO is successfully disseminated to its intended user community

INTEROPERABILITY	STANDARDIZATION	The extent to which IQEA EVO utilizes interface standards for protocols, routines and data representations;
	ICT INDEPENDENCE	The degree to which IQEA EVO model is non-dependent on the software environment (computing system, operating system, utilities, I/O routines, libraries).
	CONSISTENCY	The degree to which IQEA EVO model provides an uniform design (not different for every European Region);
	MODULARITY	The degree to which IQEA EVO model provides coherent training modules with optimum coupling;
	SIMPLICITY	The degree to which IQEA EVO model defines and implements its functions in the most non-complex and understandable manner.
TIMELINESS	PERFORMANCE TO SCHEDULE	The extent to which IQEA EVO is delivering outputs according the established schedule;
RESOURCE EFFECTIVENESS	ACTUAL VS. REQUIRED SKILLS	The extent to which the skill set required by the project matches the skill set of the human resources assigned to the project;
	PERFORMANCE TO BUDGET	The extent to which IQEA EVO model is delivered and tested according to the contracted costs;