

MONITORING AND EVALUATION MANUAL

This manual presents the key principles to the TEERE 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 TEERE's strategic shift toward results, monitoring and evaluation must provide a strong and coherent system of learning and performance measurement*



TEERE

It's the people that count

January, 2018

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This manual presents the key principles to the TEERE 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 TEERE's strategic shift toward results, monitoring and evaluation must provide a strong and coherent system of learning and performance measurement.

Head and Zonal offices are expected to monitor progress toward achievement of results systematically; to report on those results quarterly 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 Monitoring and Evaluation Manager will be expected to provide active leadership to all processes towards better monitoring, learning and evaluation for results.

The demand for increased projects and development effectiveness has been based on, among other things, a realization that “deliverables” is not enough. In many cases, efficient or well-managed projects or outputs have not actually had any discernable effect on development. The attention must therefore be centered on outcomes – realistic and positive changes in specific development conditions. By focusing on outcomes, TEERE tries to aim for results where they are most needed – people's lives.

The policy approach toward outcomes places greater emphasis on building strategic and effective partnerships; underscoring that no single organization or development actor can produce the desired results on its own, or without ownership. The skills and capacities needed for monitoring and evaluation are the same as those expected for other key office functions - principally strategic planning, teamwork, analytical abilities, learning and advisory skills and good formulation skills. The framework, does, however, require a change in mindset and behaviors of staff. One consequence is less focus on inputs and implementation tasks and greater focus on results (outcomes and outputs).

The M & E system helps key groups (senior office management; programme directors and project management) to assess performance at all levels of programming, with regard to:

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

2.0 KEY PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In line with simplification, TEERE will follow good practices when it comes to: (a) scope and (b) conduct of monitoring and evaluation. Within these principles, each zonal office has for the most part the possibility to determine tools, formats, timing, and schedules, ensuring that M & E serve as input to the management team - and our partners - in helping them to manage for results.

2.1 Scope

What is essential is the focus on results, i.e. outcomes and outputs. The M & E assesses the performance and contributions of policy, programme, project and partnership efforts toward the intended outcomes. All monitoring and evaluation efforts should address:

(a) Progress towards outcomes.

This involves analyzing periodically to what extent intended outcomes have actually been achieved or are being achieved. Evaluations have an important role to play in verifying the achievement of outcomes and in explaining what works or does not work and why. The value of evaluation depends on monitoring tools that contain some assessment of outcome progress and scanning of the national development situation;

(b) Contribution of TEERE towards outcomes.

This implies monitoring the outputs produced by TEERE through projects, advocacy, policy advice, activities etc.; analyzing whether the output is in line towards the set outcomes. Given the room for adaptation within the key principles, crisis and post-conflict areas should be able to adapt, where required, the M & E approaches to their needs. The process of being produced as planned, and most importantly whether the outputs contribute to the outcome; and

(c) Partnership strategy.

In most cases, monitoring and evaluation would also look at the partnership strategy for the outcome. Monitoring partnerships involves assessing the design of partnership strategies, the formation and functioning of partnerships. The purpose is to ensure that partners who are concerned with an outcome have a common appreciation of problems and needs, and that they are synchronized in their strategy.

The above three elements represent the minimum scope for monitoring and evaluation. Offices may add additional elements where needed for management or analysis, while ensuring that the scope is realistic in view of available capacities.

2.2 **Conduct**

The credibility of M & E findings and assessments also depends on the manner in which they are conducted. For TEERE, good monitoring and evaluation include:

- (a) Focus on progress towards intended results and follow-up with decisions and action;
- (b) Regular reporting from Project Management to the head and zonal offices with partners presenting issues and seeking solutions to problems, as a basis for analysis;
- (c) Regular monitoring visits or checks by the monitoring team to verify and validate progress;
- (d) Use of participatory monitoring mechanisms to ensure commitment, ownership, and follow-up and feedback on performance;
- (e) Use of indicators and making efforts in improving the performance measurement systems and developing baselines at all programming levels;
- (f) Assessing the relevance, performance and success of TEERE development interventions;
- (g) Actively learning and improving to adapt strategies and generating lessons and sharing them;
- (h) Active planning, conduct and use of evaluations of intended outcomes for validation of results, as well as initiative to undertake additional, voluntary evaluations when useful.

3.0 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 TEERE head office management will be expected to be more closely involved in strategic choice of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the zonal offices.

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 TEERE management – including Programme Director and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer – will remain responsible for the overall monitoring of the project's 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 Director 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 TEERE'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 workplan and the quarterly 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.

The projects can contribute to the implementation of a partnership strategy developed by the head office. They can be asked to organize voluntary project evaluations, or the head office can choose to conduct these itself. The office managing the project ensures the interface between the desired results and the expectations of the target beneficiaries, thus promoting a sense of ownership.

4.0 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 TEERE and its stakeholders, as integral parts of a head office's 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.

4.1 Planning of Evaluation

This begins as early as the formulation stage and is subsequently kept up to date continuously and 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 offices. Offices will use the plan to ensure that evaluation activities are on track, while head office will use it as the basis for monitoring evaluation compliance.

4.2 **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 TEERE 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 TEERE's contribution to them, the TEERE Programmes Director with the 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, workplan, 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 selected 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.

4.2.1 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, the monitoring team 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.

4.3 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 and often have a great effect on learning beyond the project.

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, TEERE will focus on evaluating its interventions at the level of outcomes rather than inputs and outputs, because this level reveals more about how effective TEERE's actions are in reaping real change by adding value to life. Moreover, this level promises a more credible linkage between TEERE's actions and an eventual effect than the output level.

4.3.1 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 office 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.

5.0 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT: RATING SYSTEM

Ultimately, monitoring and evaluation aim to ensure and assess success and learning from successes and mistakes. To improve TEERE performance measurement system, the project success rating system (in the evaluations) and the results will be aligned, i.e. the performance of TEERE 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.

5.1 Outcomes and outputs

A common rating system would permit performance comparisons across results, whether such comparisons are done by thematic category (e.g., health, education, poverty, etc.); level of intervention (e.g., project, output, outcome, etc.); geographic area (e.g., northern region, upper west region, upper east region, etc.); or organizational unit (e.g., head office, zonal office, etc.).

The results rating system apply to:

- (a) The evaluation will rate outcome and output progress. An analyst team at Head office makes the rating annually. The ratings will be used to report trends and progress to external stakeholders, as well as to identify weak areas for improvement by the organization.
- (b) Evaluations will rate outcome and output progress, as well as other selected 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. The rating is made by the TEERE Programmes Director and/or other office and project staff, annually for projects in the Annual Project Report and periodically for field visits. The ratings may be used by the head office for trend

analysis and lessons learned, and may be used corporately for validation, feedback and lessons learned.

6.0 SUPPORT

The monitoring and evaluation office will provide a support system to the zonal offices in the introduction of the M&E framework. The head office will continue to support periodic evaluations, while encouraging use of monitoring tools providing information on change of interest in TEERE work. Furthermore, the M & E office will ensure feedback and synthesis of evaluations to enhance the effectiveness of TEERE's development.