HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation | AFGHANISTAN

Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

Rural life is complex and diverse, and the context of farming is constantly changing. Guiding projects or activities towards impact means facing the challenges of this changing context. It is essential that an organisation/institution asks itself the following three questions: i) "Are we doing the right things?"; ii) "Are we doing things properly?"; and iii) "How can we do things better"? (Zewo Foundation, 2011). Participatory planning, monitoring and reporting helps to strengthen the ability of an organisation/institution to manage its projects and activities more efficiently and effectively (see Box 1). This note discusses participatory planning, monitoring and reporting with special emphasis on extension activities.

Box 1: Efficiency and effectiveness

Efficiency: The quality of doing something well with no waste of time or money.

Effectiveness: The fact of producing the result that is wanted or intended; a successful result.

(Oxford Dictionary, 2015)

Project Cycle Management (PCM)

Project Cycle Management (PCM) describes the management and decision-making procedures used during the timeline of a project. Most projects last several years and are implemented in several phases. Each project phase needs to be carefully planned, monitored and evaluated so as to enhance it and ensure that the project is effective, i.e. that it achieves its goal (SDC/NADEL).

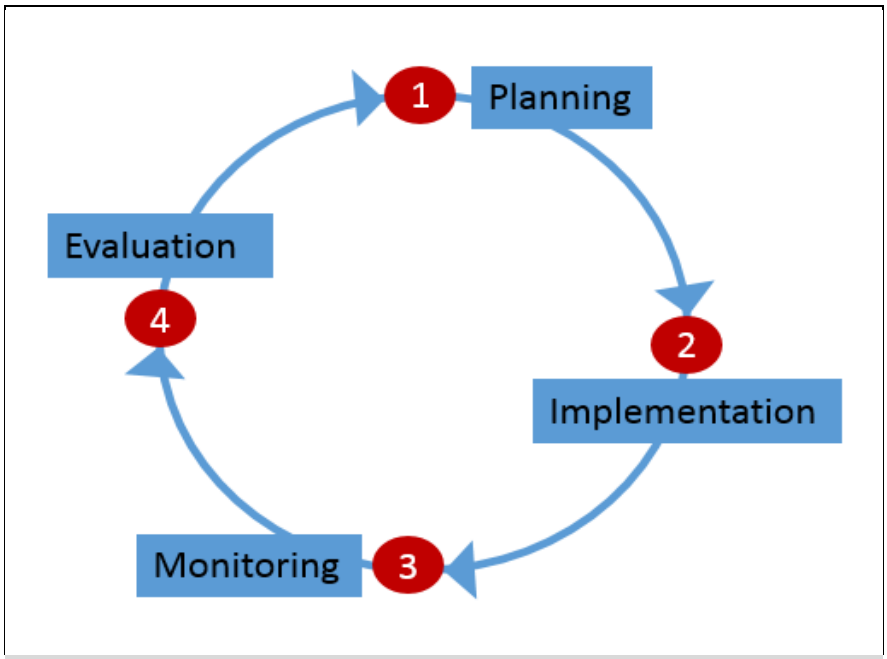


Figure 1: Project Cycle Management (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, 2015)

PCM includes the four phases of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and can be described as follows (see Figure 1).

The **planning** phase involves: a) identifying new project ideas and defining the objectives of the project; b) developing a results model, which means to analysing where you are now and where you want to go, and how to get there; and c) planning how to measure results (see Box 2 on the next page).

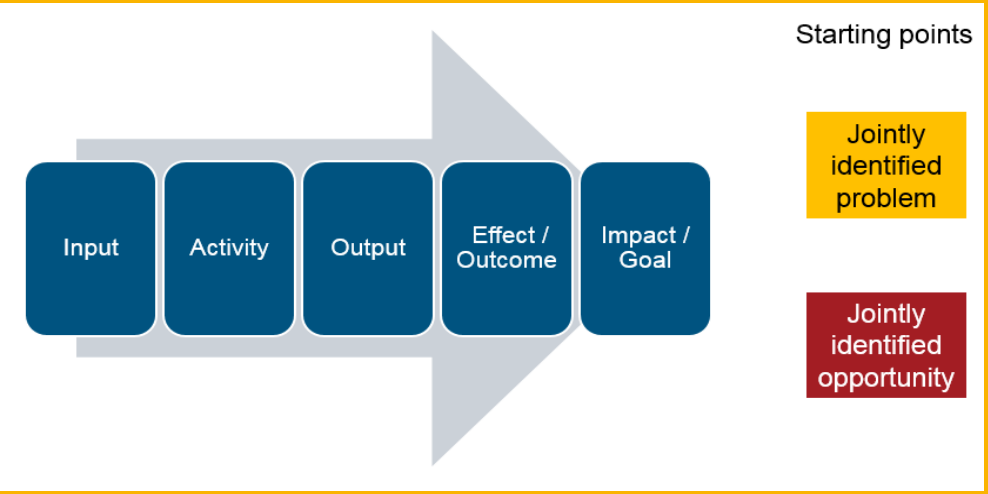
The **implementation** phase involves not only implementing planned activities, but also steering (directing and adjusting) and managing the project. Step three, the collection of data/**monitoring,** is a fundamental part of this.

In the fourth step, the **evaluation** phase, the effects of the project are evaluated and the findings from the evaluation are used for learning to define a new project phase or a new project (Zewo Foundation, 2011).

PCM is also useful to manage activities within a project, e.g. extension activities, as each single activity can present a small project on its own with planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases. This note will focus mainly on participatory planning, monitoring and reporting for extension activities.

Box 2: What is a logical framework?

The **logical framework (logframe)** builds on the development of a strategy for interventions based on the principle of a chain of causes and effects:



The project produces and provides outputs (services and products) in order to achieve effects for change (outcomes and impacts).

Normally, the construction of the logical framework starts from the back by agreeing on the impact and outcomes down to the outputs, activities and inputs.

Source: SDC/NADEL

Normally, development projects use "logical framework" to present their intervention logic. The logical framework is established during project planning, and includes indicators for each level of intervention in order to measure the success of a project.

Planning

Planning means agreeing on the change to be effected by development and the defining actions that will make this particular change happen. Often, one starts with the identification of a problem and actions to solve this problem. A problem can be defined as the gap between "what is?" and "what should be?" By looking at the situation or problem as it is at present and how it should be after the completion of the project, we are able to define a strategy for getting there (SDC/NADEL). An equally valid approach is to build an intervention by identifying opportunities (rather than problems).

Participatory planning as a process should be carried out in close collaboration with key stakeholders and members of the affected communities in an open, participatory and egalitarian way. This means that due respect is given to gender and social equity, and female and male, young and old, wealthy and deprived people are involved in the planning process in an egalitarian way. Participatory planning is often considered a community development process; for example, participatory planning is the first step in community-based watershed management.

In practice, a meeting with the community and key stakeholders from public and private is arranged, and there is a joint diagnosis of needs and priorities within the community. There are different tools and methods for identifying the present situation - "what is" (problems, opportunities and context analysis) - through reviewing existing information and data, and by means of surveys such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). For more information, please refer to the Concept Note on Participatory Rural Appraisal, Concept Note on Participatory Planning for Watershed Management. Moreover, the identification of the future situation, i.e. "what should be", should also be carried out in close cooperation with the affected communities by appropriate methods (e.g. focus group, round table, workshop, brainstorming, SWOT analysis or PRA) (see Figure 2 on the next page).

In a second step, action plans and project proposals are developed, based on the priorities decided upon by all involved stakeholders. This step can also be performed in smaller working groups, with fewer, representative members (selected, gender balanced) from the community, local government and project staff. An "Extension Activity Sheet", such as the one in Annex 2, is a helpful instrument in participatory planning for extension activities.

The purpose of participatory planning is to develop a common understanding and to build trust and confidence in a community through the appreciation of different views and joint elaboration of relevant project ideas. However, there are also challenges to participatory planning. Annex 1 gives an additional overview of the five steps of planning, as well the tasks and a selection of appropriate instruments.

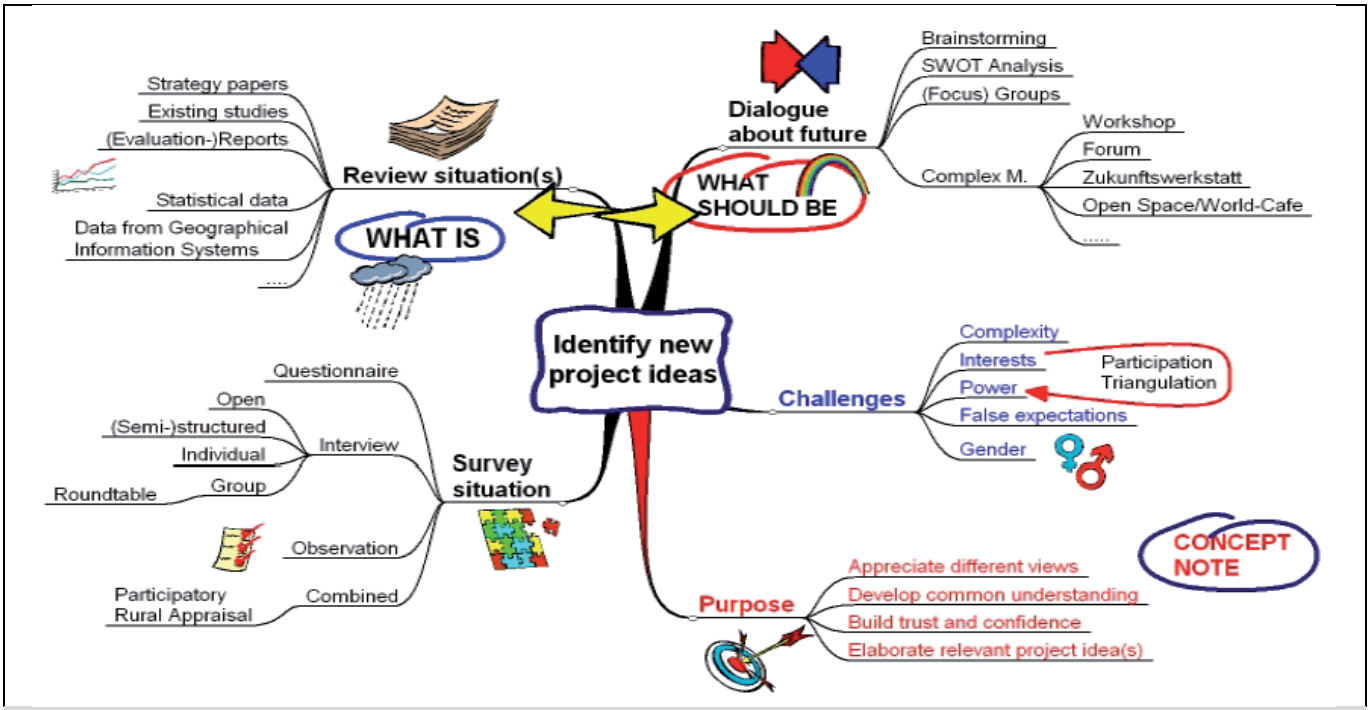


Figure 2: Tools and methods to identify "what is" and "what should be" (SDC/NADEL).

Monitoring

Implementing a project or managing a project also means steering a project, directing and adjusting it, and seeking the best way forward. To do this in a rational way the project management needs relevant and reliable information. Monitoring can be described as the continuous observation and systematic collection of relevant data, which helps to assess the progress being made, and if the objectives - as well as the impact - is achieved (SDC/NADEL).

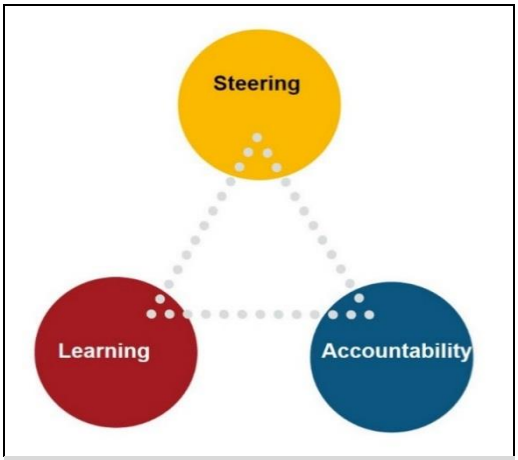


Figure 3: The three pillars of monitoring and evaluation (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

Monitoring has three purposes (see Figure 3). On the one hand, monitoring aids accountability and records and assesses (proves) that the impact and benefits are achieved with the given resources. On the other hand, monitoring helps us to steer, observe where we stand, and decide how to go on (improve). Thirdly, monitoring is also a learning process within a project or organisation.

Box 3: Monitoring for learning

In recent years, monitoring has shifted to being a participative learning process as well. Raw data is analysed and discussed in groups or teams. Relating this information to the actual situation helps teams to learn and to increase their experience and knowledge.

SDC/NADEL

In practice, monitoring means assessing the activities and outputs of a project, or collecting and processing information, at regular intervals. The following four questions guide the monitoring process: 1) what, 2) who, 3) how and 4) when. An "Extension Reporting Sheet" like the one in Annex 3 is a helpful instrument for monitoring extension activities. The "Extension Reporting Sheet" should always be linked to the "Extension Activity Sheet"; this facilitates planning and monitoring. Results from monitoring are always fed back into the planning process. Proper reporting of monitoring results is therefore key. For more information, please refer to the Concept Note on Monitoring and Evaluation.

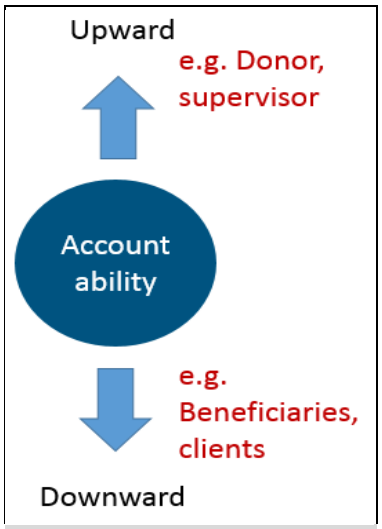


Figure 4: Up- and downward accountability (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

Reporting

Many extension workers regard reporting as a laborious task and underestimate its importance. A report should always provide information about the progress made, but also give details of change, associated risks, new challenges and suggested solutions.

An “Extension Reporting Sheet” summarises project activities including key steps of activity implementation, corresponding performance indicators and monitoring schedules. Annex 3 presents such an “Extension Reporting Sheet”.

However, writing a report is not the end of the task. The information from the “Extension Reporting Sheets” also needs to be aggregated (together with other data) for outcome and impact assessments. Monitoring data (activities and outputs) can be aggregated (together with other data) to produce an outcome and impact assessment, where the guiding questions are: Are we doing the right things? and Are we doing things right? Data aggregation is best performed using a suitable database (Excel, Access etc.). A database makes it possible to manage large quantities of data and for analysis and evaluation proposes (SDC/NADEL).

Last but not least, planning, monitoring and reporting processes are clearly interlinked and equally important for project management, and should be understood as a cyclical activity (PCM).

Further reading and references

SDC/NADEL Project Cycle Management Interactive: Results-based Project Cycle Management, A vade mecum for people in development and cooperation, Module 1-5. Available at: http://elearningpcm.ch/

Zewo Foundation, 2011: Outcome and Impact Assessment in International Development. Available at:http://impact.zewo.ch/english/docs/Zewo_Wirkungsmessung_E_web.pdf

This publication has been made possible through financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. The content, however, is the sole responsibility of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Annex 1: Planning

	Planning stages	Tasks	Instruments
What is	**1. Analysis of initial situation** Where are we? What are the problems and the potential?	• Stakeholder analysis • Problem analysis • Potential analysis	• Stakeholder analysis matrix • Problem tree • Fishbone diagram • SEPO/SWOT analysis
What should be	**2. Vision of intended change** Where do we want to go to? What results do we expect to achieve?	• Analysis of intended results: outcomes and im-pact • Analysis of risks and as-sumptions	• Result tree • Brainstorming • Visioning • Result chain or framework
	3. Appraisal of alternative approaches What alternative approaches are there? How should we assess them? Which approach do we choose?	• Analysis of alternative approaches	• Decision matrix • Utility analysis • Cost-benefit analysis • SWOT • Multi-criteria approach
How to fill the gap	**4. Design of project strategy** What results do we set? How can we achieve them? How can we check to see if we have achieved them? What external factors influence the project?	Design of Logframe: • Hierarchy of results • Assumptions • Indicators and sources of information • Inputs/Resources	• Logframe • Risk assessment • Standard indicators • Feasibility study
	5. Design of project organisation What are the roles and responsi-bilities? What means are available and are needed? How will the project be steered and evaluated?	• Definition of organisational set-up • Allocation of means • Design of monitoring and evaluation system	• Organisational Chart • Project document

Annex 1: The steps, tasks and instruments in planning (SDC/NADEL).

Annex 2: Extension Activity Sheet

Activity title	

Activity Number		Year	

Responsible	

Location	Province	District	CDC

Time Frame	Start	Expected completion date

Objective	
Expected Results	
Refers to output in Logframe	

	Type of activity	Choose
1	Extension tool development (poster, leaflet, “how to note”, video…)	
2	Individual advice	
3	Meeting / Workshop / exchange platform	
4	Farmer Field School / Training	
5	Farmer exchange / study tour	
6	Participatory Innovation Development	
7	Demonstration / Field Day	
8	Exhibition / fair / competition	
9	Study / survey	
10	Other	

Planned activity implementation (Key steps)		Expected date
1		
2		
3		
4		

Indicators (from Logframe)		Frequency of monitoring
1		

2		
3		
4		

Monitoring		Reporting (expected date for)	
Institution		Progress report	
Responsible Person		Final Activity Report	

Service Provider		Name of Institution	Chose
1	Government extension staff		
2	CDC / Community Facilitator		
3	Research / Education Institution		
4	Farmer Organisation		
5	Non-for-Profit Organisation		
6	Private Sector Company		
7	Development Project		
8	Other		

Target group (number of persons)	Men	Women	Disadvantaged	Youth
Farmer / herders				
Field Practitioners				
Resource Persons				
Others				
Total Persons				

Budget for activity (AFG)	Project contribution	Other contribution	Total
Allowances / per diem			
Food & accommodation			
Transport			
Material costs			
Other			
Total			

Remarks

Approval by	Date

Annex 3: Extension Reporting Sheet

Activity title	

Activity Number		Year	

Responsible	

Location	Province	District	CDC

Time Frame	Start	Expected completion date
		Date of completion

Objective	
Expected Results	
Refers to output in Logframe	

	Type of activity	Choose
1	Extension tool development (poster, leaflet, “how to note”, video…)	
2	Individual advice	
3	Meeting / Workshop / exchange platform	
4	Farmer Field School / Training	
5	Farmer exchange / study tour	
6	Participatory Innovation Development	
7	Demonstration / Field Day	
8	Exhibition / fair / competition	
9	Study / survey	
10	Other	

Activity implementation (Key steps)		Date of completion
1		
2		
3		
4		

Indicators (from Logframe)		Achievement
1		
2		
3		
4		

Number of persons reached	Men	Women	Disadvantaged	Youth
Farmer / herders				
Field Practitioners				
Resource Persons				
Others				
Total Persons				

Expenses (AFG)	Project contribution	Other contribution	Total
Allowances / per diem			
Food & accommodation			
Transport			
Material costs			
Other			
Total			

Lessons learned	
What went well?	
What was difficult?	
What would I do differently next time?	

Monitoring		Reporting: Date of submission	
Institution		Progress report	
Responsible Person		Final Activity Report	

Approval of report by	Date