

MODULE VI
MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E), REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

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Note: Some pages which are intended for exercises and work during the course are omitted in the Participant's version. They will be handed out during the course.

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Completing operational cycles:

The four topics of this module complete operational cycles in a logical manner using the outputs of all processes to improve operations based on facts and reliable analysis of results.

2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Section II explains how the process of monitoring all other processes of relevance to the union provides opportunities for improvement during on-going activities, and how essential it is to evaluate and demonstrate the extent of the union's achievements.

Section II also explains the role of evaluation not only to demonstrate achievements but also to identify strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on the basis of reliable indicators, offering conclusions about issues identified during analysis and suggestions for improvements.

3 Review and Improvement

Section III highlights the importance of the Leadership Review process and the techniques to go about for effective review. It also highlights improvement as the major output of the review and the central role the Leadership plays in generating continuous improvement through a systemic approach in leadership.

A few learning exercises focus on techniques and content of the improvement process.

II. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1 Definitions

Often, monitoring and evaluation are referred to as one concept with the acronym M&E. However they are two very distinctive processes although extremely interrelated. While **evaluation** is the systematic examination of the extent to which the union has been able to meet stakeholder requirements, **monitoring** is the continuous recording of indicator-data to supply information about progress in execution of activities in connection to established timetables, infrastructure, inputs, activities and outputs¹.

2 Monitoring

In paragraph 4.5 of Module II, Section II the concept and scope of monitoring are further described.

One could also say that monitoring is the act of ensuring the implementing team is on the right track through unknown territory, or if known, through a new path; periodically checking where one is vis-à-vis the course drawn on the map, or even if having taken exactly the same trail (following exactly the same process), periodically checking if performance is as good as the previous time or whether it could be improved.

2.1 Advantages of monitoring

In broad terms, one could say that the quality of the overall outcome of a process or project is equal to the sum of achievements minus the sum of failures in outputs and results. Monitoring while executing increases the probability of overall achievements and has two practical advantages:

2.1.1 Facilitating rapid corrective action:

If an instant result does not satisfy its expected outcome (minimum level indicator of progress or achievement), often corrections can be made on the spot, before the output become the input to the following process;

2.1.2 Providing evidence of progress and achievement:

Keeping records and feeding them into the evaluation process helps to measure variations vis-à-vis expected results and, after analysis of comparable records and data, to identify possible solutions to weaknesses in execution.

2.2 Monitoring system

A monitoring procedure should be devised for every indicator included in the logical planning matrix and monitoring should be designed in such a way that recording is made easy for the people executing the task and the recording.

The basis of the monitoring system is the activity planning form. Each plan should include requirements for recording outcomes from the sources of verification defined during the planning process. Some activity records that are used for self-control should be kept by the activity leader, others that are important for the coordination of other activities or processes should be channelled to the appropriate places in due time so that interactive processes flow smoothly. The Leadership should also define which monitoring records are important for the Leadership to have to keep the project running at the planned pace. The Leadership should inform activity leaders of these needs and of the procedure to follow for the records to reach the Leadership in a timely manner.

For each project or process, the monitoring system should define which data need to be recorded, by whom, with what objective, who should receive particular monitoring records or copies of them, and with what celerity recording and transmission of records should occur.

¹ See Module II, Section II, 1. Definitions.

While the monitoring process appears separately from execution in the operational efficiency cycle, monitoring works continuously and during execution from the moment the first record must be completed according to planning. At the same time, monitoring should not distract implementers from their most important task which is execution. Therefore, monitoring should be simple, practical and rapid.

The monitoring system should also satisfy overall leadership needs related to overall strategies and trends in the union field, beyond projects and specific activities. Therefore, a special branch of the monitoring system should collect and process data that is independent from project implementation but that affects the union's institutional positioning in the sector and labour market, as well as its own institutional future.

2.2.1 Overall process

If union operations are going to be effective the critical processes discussed in the operational efficiency cycle (Module II, Section II) are intrinsic to projects, regular functions, planned activities and sporadic events that conform to recurring conditions such as campaigns, demonstrations, collective bargaining, negotiations, grievance handling and strikes. All these must be monitored during execution of these processes or the execution of the whole annual, biennial or quadrennial plan, and also while inter-related projects take place. The frequency and object of monitoring should be coherent with the characteristics of each process. In due time, all monitoring data will allow consistent evaluation.

Within each sequential process (IDPEMER), from the union field analysis to review and improvement process, all variables that have an impact on the quality of the process should be monitored following the operational efficiency cycle steps.

Figure VI-2.2.1 shows the sequence of processes as they interrelate, and highlights the Leadership team's roles in initiating actions as well as in reviewing and leading improvement.

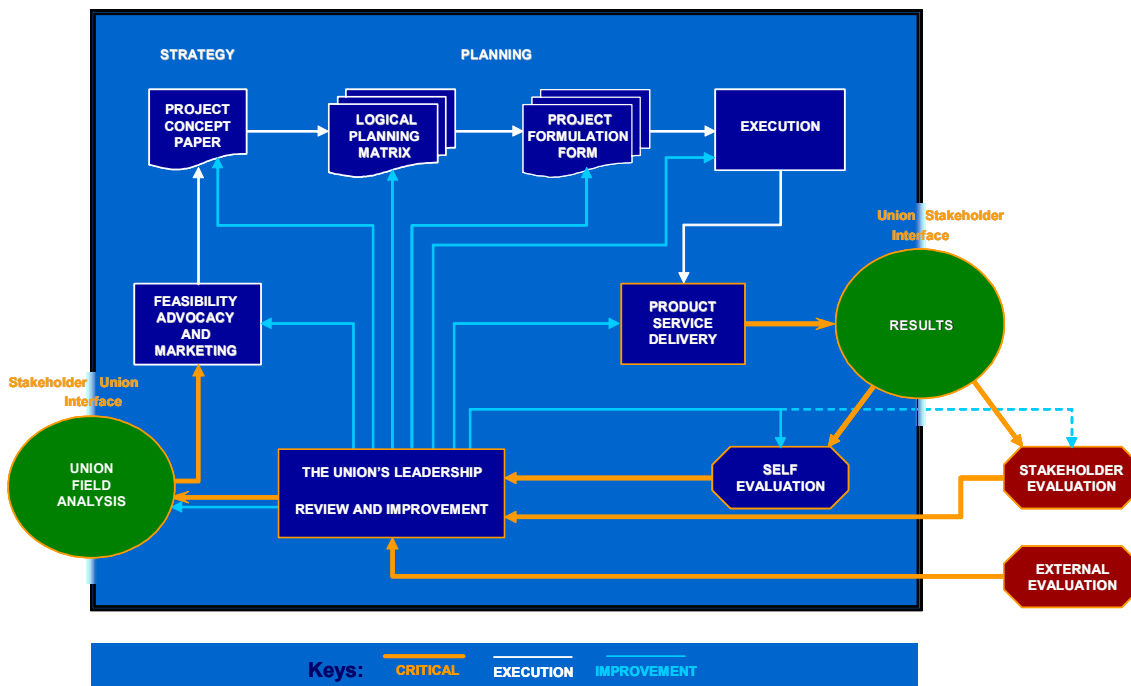


Figure VI-2.2.1 – Monitoring, Evaluation, Review, and Improvement flow

2.2.2 Monitoring Records

Monitoring records can have many forms depending on the process being monitored. For instance, a training workshop monitoring-form will include the title of the workshop, the target audience, duration of the workshop, the list of participants including for instance: participants' institutional origin, position, gender, age, skills; and any other variable considered essential to measure the level of achievement of the activity.

2.2.3 Flow of monitoring data

Some data are required by those executing a process for self awareness and to stay on track; other data are required by the Leadership in order to keep an overall view of where all activities are and to prevent delays when the beginning of one activity depends on the completion of another. The Leadership should ensure that the monitoring system includes these links and that they are consistent with established roles and timetables.

2.3 Validity of data

For a monitoring system to be effective, the validity of the data recorded is crucial. If equipment is necessary to obtain indicator data, the components of required technology should be reliable and appropriately calibrated. Monitoring forms should be standard so they can be easily identifiable and handled and data-recording and processing facilitated. Data written on monitoring forms should be clear and legible.

The speed in the flow of the monitoring data is also essential to the validity of such data. Monitoring data must be in the places where they are needed on time to enable opportune decisions and to determine progress of execution at any occasion. In designing the monitoring system, the union should define responsibilities and processes that guarantee validity of data, because valid data provides confidence in assessing progress and demonstrating achievements, and are the basis of any reliable evaluation.

2.4 Progress reports and end-of-project reports

A monitoring system that is continuously up-to-date is essential to facilitate and speed up the completion of progress reports. Progress reports are often required by the union levels that are above the level of execution and by the Leadership. GUF head offices and SSOs use standard forms for this purpose and require that progress reports be completed either every six months or annually. End-of-project reports also follow the same similar requirements although their structures may be somewhat different.

The course CDR contains templates of frequently used progress and end-of-project reports.

3 Evaluation

As pointed out under 1. above, evaluation is the systematic examination of the extent of achievements at specific times during the life of the project and at its completion. Evaluation relies primarily on monitoring records but also on observation and interaction with those responsible for execution.

Evaluation is a plan or project in its own right and requires objectivity. All opinions given in an evaluation report must have factual bases.

To determine the extent to which the union has been able to meet stakeholder requirements, evaluators draw up an evaluation plan where they established the objectives of the evaluation. These objectives help evaluators determine what data needs to be compiled or collected, processed and analysed to reach conclusions that respond to the objectives set out in the plan.

The purpose of evaluation is to identify strengths that should be maintained, weaknesses that need to be reduced or eliminated, opportunities that, if taken advantage of, may contribute to increase the union's performance and impact, and the threats the union may encounter in the future that need to be reduced or avoided.

The output of evaluation is a report which explains the process followed: the evaluation objectives, the methodologies used for data collection and processing, the results of data processing, a thorough analysis of those results, conclusions on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and recommendations on sustainability of achievements, corrective actions and improvement.

Evaluations are usually carried out at the request of one or more interested stakeholders in a process or project. According to territorial coverage, evaluations may be local, regional, national or international processes; they are also varied in content, as they may focus on either one line of activities or a specific project, product or service, or on the overall operations of the organisation being evaluated, at any or all its operational levels or territorial and/or functional structures.

There are three types of evaluations:

- 3.1 Self-evaluation: usually decided internally, in order to determine needs for improvement within a team, or organisation. Although self-evaluators must choose as objective indicators as possible, their analyses and the conclusions may be biased and lack objectivity. Examples of self-evaluations could be, for instance, an evaluation decided by the N.E.C. and assigned to the union's own education department, to assess the extent of applicability of the current education programme to the needs of members within the context of the global economy; an evaluation assigned to the union's political committee and legal adviser, to assess the achievements of the latest political campaign intended to influence a change in legislation.
- 3.2 Second-party evaluation: usually decided by a customer, receiver, sponsor, or beneficiary of products or services from a supplier, or benefiting from the achievement of activities being carried out by an organisation or the union. Its objective is to determine the level of quality of the products or services being or about to be received from a given supplier or the level of achievement of project funded by a sponsor. Examples of second-party evaluation could be, for instance, an evaluation of selected postal and courier services carried out by the union to determine which one of them best suits the need of the union for rapid, effective and reasonably priced communications; the evaluation carried out by SSO staff of a project funded by the SSO.

- 3.3 External evaluation: external evaluations, also called independent evaluations, are usually decided by one or several parties with interdependent interests on a supplier's or beneficiary's performance. The parties agree on sub-contracting the evaluation services from a jointly trusted independent evaluator (individual or company, experienced in the areas being evaluated). Prior to hiring the evaluation services the parties agree on their common objectives for the evaluation and write up the evaluation's terms of reference (TOR). Then, on the basis of the TOR, they select the evaluation services and organise the process in full coordination with all parties involved.

Not all evaluations fit exactly into these three categories. For example, the "stakeholder" evaluation in the Figure VI-2.2. represents also union-initiated stakeholder evaluations, for instance: sending questionnaires to members asking them about their satisfaction with one or various union activities or services. Second-party evaluation could also be carried out on the basis of existing information and data, without necessarily obtaining an agreement from the organisation being evaluated; although such evaluations may be based on reliable data, they have a desk-view only, and lack the up-to-date perspective that interaction with people in the present environment provides.

III. REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

1 Review

This process is at the core of the Leadership function. It is the unavoidable method to keep the union moving forward in the right direction and achieving an ever more important position within the labour market. Module II gives a generic definition of the review process in paragraph 1.7 and gives a brief description of it in paragraph 4.7

Through this key function, the Leadership reassesses the union's operational system and planning process at periodic intervals, to ensure continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. The review identifies opportunities for improvement and needs for changes to the current system and plans, including the efficiency policy and development objectives.

During execution, the monitoring system not only records implementers', members' and/or stakeholder immediate satisfaction with execution outputs, but also their overall satisfaction with the union's impact and position, collecting data on general issues that allow understanding of the union-field's needs, demands and opportunities. The Leadership has the responsibility to be aware of these, monitor general indicators, and take advantage of its own interaction with the field to update and complete its vision. This interaction is graphically represented in Figure 3-2.1 below by the interactive arrow linking the Leadership's responsibility with the union's field.

The Leadership should keep records of leadership reviews and use them to strengthen direction and instil improvements.

- 1.1 **Inputs:** the major inputs to the leadership review are:
 - 1.1.1 Selected information and monitoring-data from the various steps in the operational efficiency system channelled to the Leadership through pre-established communications means;
 - 1.1.2 Stakeholder feedback from stakeholder evaluations or other evaluation data from recorded observations.
 - 1.1.3 Progress reports on activities, reports on progress and achievement of projects and expected results in relation to indicators and project planning documentation;
 - 1.1.4 Status of preventive and corrective actions decided in the running or execution of activities, projects and plans;
 - 1.1.5 Follow-up actions from previous leadership reviews;
 - 1.1.6 External or internal changes that could affect the achievement of objectives being pursuit;
 - 1.1.7 Recommendations for improvement identified through evaluation reports received from various sources of interaction with stakeholders, or elaborated within the leadership team.
- 1.2 **Process:** usually a well prepared Leadership retreat of one to three days, where all members of the Leadership meet to analyse evaluation reports and their own findings or perceptions on the union's operational performance and take decisions for improvement. The review retreat requires:
 - 1.2.1 Careful and dedicated preparation, organisation and a precise agenda;
 - 1.2.2 Distribution of all material to be discussed well in advance of the meeting, so that participants are fully informed and have time to reflect on all issues.
 - 1.2.3 Efficient running of the meeting to cover all subjects in the time allowed, executive debate, clear decisions for the future, and allocation of responsibility for decisions taken.

- 1.2.4 The full commitment of all participants to allocate the time required by the review for full and uninterrupted participation, without interruptions.
- 1.2.5 Because the review process has such an important role in the life of a union, it is recommended that the review retreat takes place away from the participant's daily environment and work, in a place where participants can concentrate fully and easily, detach their daily environment.
- 1.3 **Outputs:** the review outputs are decisions in three major directions:
- 1.3.1 Improvements of the effectiveness of operational systems and processes. These include improvements within the context of the union's operational efficiency cycle as well as within its sub-cycles;
- 1.3.2 Improvements of union products, outcomes, programmes, projects, activities or services to members and stakeholders, within the context of its social and political impact.
- 1.3.3 Definition of the resources needed to implement improvements, eliminate identified deficiencies and overcome threats.
- 2 **Improvement:** continuous improvement is the outcome of effective leadership. Figure VI-2.2.1 above shows the effective execution (operational) process-structure where the Leadership takes the initiative by stimulating the union's field analysis through strong critical inputs represented by an orange connecting arrow.

The graphical description of the process implies, however, a pre-set sequence of sub-processes interlinked by a critical flow of action triggered by the union field analysis and sequential execution steps followed by feasibility studies, advocacy of the union's intentions to respond to issues identified during the field analysis and further sequential processes already explained in previous sections of this course. The execution process ends with the description of the critical action-flow between product/service delivery and results. Then, three other critical flows return evaluation information into the union Leadership's review and improvement processes.

Nine improvement flows emanate from the Leadership process towards each element in the operational process. The inward and outward flows linking the leadership process demonstrate the real role of the Leadership: 1) to ensure that resources are in place to take on the execution of actions; 2) to trigger actions; 3) to delegate responsibility for execution; 4) to ensure monitoring and evaluation feedback; 5) to review feedback information, and 6) to lead continuous improvement as the operational cycle revolves.

2.1 Systemic leadership

In order to succeed in the role of effective leadership, the union's Leadership has to learn to work as a team, learn to organise resources, learn to delegate execution onto the best trained and capable people and learn to make the union better all the time.

The improvement process discussed above shows a systemic approach to handle the operational aspect of running the union. Leading in a systemic manner is a similar process that focuses on the essential functions of the Leadership within the union and its relationships with the union's field, including sector workers, the union and its stakeholders, which in turn include potential members and workers at large, employers, government and public administration, the civil society, political and other interested parties, solidarity support organisations and society at large.

Within the union, the Leadership has a central role and its first responsibility is to establish effective interaction with the field and to get to know its needs, opportunities and demands. Only if it knows the union's field in depth can the Leadership show direction with authority, and develop people and allocate appropriate resources to respond effectively to the field's requirements.

Strong leadership capabilities are required to transform field needs, demands and opportunities into input requirements; to delegate responsibility on the right people and lead them to perform activities, generate products, provide services, deliver them to beneficiaries in the field, and achieve objectives that satisfy those requirements.

The leadership role would not be complete without demonstration that the intended responses have succeeded in meeting objectives, or without knowing how they could be improved in efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, all that is done must be monitored and its impact measured and evaluated to determine the level with which the union satisfies requirements.

Systemic leadership shows direction based on fact; through processing monitoring data and evaluation inputs the Leadership reaches beyond isolated operational outcomes, strengthening its overall vision of the union’s field situation. Through the review process, the Leadership assesses the union’s impact and takes consequent decisions for improvements in all directions where progress may be needed. Figure III-2.1 shows the process of systemic leadership explained in the above paragraphs.



Figure III-2.1 – Systemic Leadership