

A positive look at Monitoring, Review and Evaluation – International Development experiences affecting Regeneration Work in the UK.

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Introduction

1. In this presentation I want to try and take a positive approach to Monitoring Review and Evaluation (M, R & E). All too often these three activities are seen as being necessary evils. They are often imposed on us as dictates from above. Sometimes we find them very threatening activities in which we grudgingly have to invest a lot of time. Symptomatic of this situation is where “top down” imposed Performance Indicators (PIs) rapidly become translated into another type of PI namely - Perverse Incentives. On the other hand we all need to see the positive side of M R & E activities. They are critically important activities that can help us improve our practice, learn lessons, and positively share these lessons with others. Our approach to them is critically important.
2. Having spent my career in international development I have been amazed in recent years to find so many parallels between international development work and regeneration/renewal work in the UK. There is a huge literature and body of practice of international development on which we can draw (see for example Dale 2004 and Roche 2002). I would like to share some of the positive lessons learned in the South and demonstrate how some of these lessons are currently being built upon and used in the UK. This is a real example of South-North learning as opposed to the more usual and rather stereotypical North-South learning.
3. Given the time constraints I would like to highlight just two approaches. The first is that of the Logical Framework Approach to project design and delivery (including M R & E) and the second is that of Participatory Approaches to M. R. & E. It is this combination of these two, which I believe, has given us a set of powerful practical tools and processes for monitoring, review and evaluation work in the regeneration/renewal sector.
4. Before we look at these I would like us to start with a brief examination of the simple question: Why we should be evaluating programmes and projects?
There are two simple reasons:
 - i To show impact – to demonstrate that we have made a difference.
Unfortunately this process is often perceived as being rather negative in that we have to prove this to others - often those funding us!
 - ii To learn lessons and improve project and programme design and perhaps even influence policy. This aspiration is I hope slightly more positive. We need to genuinely learn from our clients, share our lessons and not just demonstrate that we have made a difference but help others do so in the future.

International Development – Programmes and Projects

5. We now have over 50 years of international development experience. Very considerable progress has been made. There are however still many huge challenges ahead. Many Project and Programmes have been successful. Some have not. Most, if not all international donor funded programmes and projects have faced two key challenges. Those of ownership and partnership. If we consider the delivery of project or programme as being analogous to a bus journey then we can ask some simple questions:
- Who is driving the bus?
 - Is it going in the right direction?
 - Who decides where it goes? When? How? Via?
 - Who is paying? Who is getting a free ride?
 - Where are the poor or socially excluded? Are they driving? Are they inside the bus? On the roof? Hanging on? Walking?
 - Who is going to pay for the maintenance of the bus?
 - Who built the road?
 - Who is going to pay for the maintenance of the road?
 - Who are the police?
 - And so on and so forth...
6. These simple but critically important questions have contributed to the process of a series of tools and processes that are now often used in international development projects and programmes (see for example DFID 2003). These tools importantly include the use of logical frameworks.

The Logical Framework Approach

7. The Logical Framework¹ Approach (LFA) has now been adopted by virtually all of the international donor agencies. The approach combines an accessible management tool and a set of team working processes. Together these serve a number of very practical purposes – e.g. for designing, appraising, implementing (including managing), monitoring, reviewing and evaluating programmes and projects.
8. It is often associated (indeed combined) with the PCM – Project Cycle Management – approach and the PPCM – Programme² and Project Cycle Management Approach (See Dearden and Kowalski 2002).

A Brief History of the Logical Framework Approach

9. The Logframe has its roots in American military planning (Nancholas 1998). In 1969 it was developed for the U.S. Agency for International Development by the consulting firm Practical Concepts (Practical Concepts 1978). The early logframes, developed during the 1970s, were simple project evaluation tools developed in order to help the USAID increase accountability to the American Congress.

¹ Logical Frameworks are often just called logframes

² There has been a long-standing international discussion in donor and government agencies and among development planners over the merits and demerits of 'programme vs. projects' approach. Proponents of the programme approach point out, for example, that projects can undermine central capacity development and national ownership. There are a number of points for and against programmes and projects. These are summarised in Annex 1.

10. A second generation of the LFA importantly recognised the importance of both the content of the design and the team processes undertaken to attain it. By the 1980s the Germans, for example, had begun to use the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) as a participatory planning tool involving project beneficiaries and other key stakeholders in the planning process (GTZ 1988).
11. A third generation of the LFA (Sartorius 1996) combined newly developed computer software (Team Technologies 1993) with guidelines for integration with other Project Cycle Management tools such as stakeholder analysis and problem analysis.
12. By the late 1990s there was a widespread uptake of the LFA by nearly all the international donor agencies. It was recognised that the LFA provided a useful set of design tools that can, when used creatively and in a participatory manner, be used for planning, designing, implementing and evaluating projects and programmes. The rationale of taking a participatory approach is now very much emphasised by many of those involved in development work. See Box 1

Box 1: The rationale for taking a participatory approach to project/programme design, delivery, monitoring, review and evaluation.

- Build partnerships and ownership
- Build consensus among programme/project staff and partners about goals/objectives
- Enhance local learning, management capacity and skills
- Provide timely and reliable and valid information for decision making
- Increase cost effectiveness
- Empower local people to make their own decisions about the future

The Participatory Logical Framework Approach in the UK

13. The LFA was introduced into the UK in 1998 to the national Health Action Zone (HAZ) programmes and projects (Dearden 2001). During the period of 1998 and 2001 several hundred senior staff in the HAZs and the NHS received training in the participatory use of the LFA. (Daniel and Dearden 2001).
14. Following its practical use and popularity with Health Action Zone (HAZ) staff in many other Regeneration/Renewal projects around the country have taken up the approach. The national New Deal for Communities (NDCs) initiative took up the approach in 1999 and many hundreds of NDC project staff have now been trained in the approach (Spreckley 2005).

Recent Use of the Logical Framework Approach in the UK

15. In the past two years the Sheffield 0 - 19+ Partnership have sponsored a series of training events for staff across the city in the practical and participatory use of the LFA. A wide range of staff have now been trained in the LFA (See Table 1 over).

Table 1 - List of organisations in Sheffield who have sent representatives to Logical Framework workshops (April 2003 – September 2005)

Sheffield City Council	National Health Service (NHS)	Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheffield First for Inclusion and Partnership • Regeneration and Partnership • Transport and Commercial Services • Attendance and Inclusion • Sure Start • Employee Management Development Unit • Homeless Families • Youth Offending Team • Child Protection Unit • Strategic Housing • Children's Fund • Children with Disabilities • Policy and Performance, Education Directorate • 0-19+ Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAMHS • Maternal Strategy Group • Midwifery • South East PCT • North PCT • Speech and Language Therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFFER (Open Forum for Economic Regeneration) • Local Links • VAS (Voluntary Action Sheffield) • SHED • South Yorkshire Regional Network • Roundabout • Sheffield Futures • Wakefield Children's Fund • Black Palm • Connexions • DfES

16. During the recent training in Sheffield it has been noted that the construct of the Project and/or Programme Cycle is a rather artificial (and sometimes alien) one for many of the users in the city. The training materials that have been developed for the courses have now very much moved away from the Project Cycle and have moved towards a series of 7 simple project planning questions that help us move from "Here" to "There" as a simple project or programme journey. (See Figure 1 over). This approach has been found to be easier to conceptualise and is thus more user friendly. The concept also helps pull together multi disciplinary and multi agency teams who have to travel their analogous journey from "Here" to "There" together.

17. Like PCM training the first exercise is a simple stakeholder analysis to identify the key players involved in the project and programme. This is followed by a clear identification of the problem that the project or programme is trying to address. The problem tree is then turned into an objectives tree and options analysed before the chosen objectives are placed into the logical framework.

18. A further important part of the process is the development of a risk analysis and the identification of possible mitigatory measures that can be undertaken to manage some of the identified risks and then identify the remain assumptions which have to be clearly placed into the logframe.

19. Clearly identified Indicators and means or sources of Verification are added to the logframe and these form the basis of M, R & E activities. (See Annex 3).

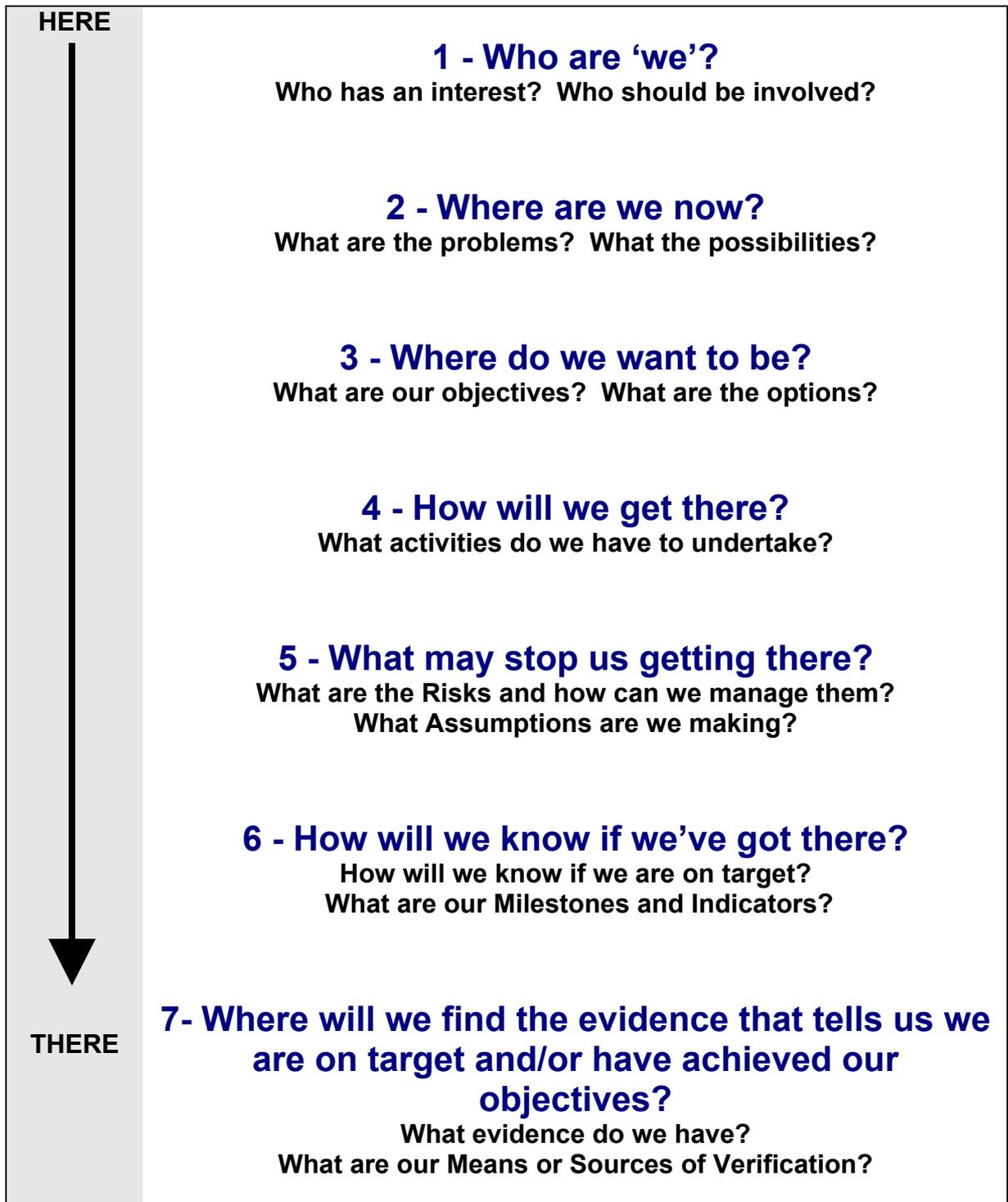


Figure 1 - The 7 Core questions that need to be asked when planning any programme or project. These questions are the key questions of the Logical Framework Approach and form the basis of the LFA training approach developed in Sheffield for the 0-19+ Partnership. See Dearden 2005 <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/search/EP00025/>

Some Conclusions

20. The LFA can provide a structured and logical approach to the setting of priorities and assist in determining the intended results and activities of a project or programme. Used correctly, logframes can provide a sound mechanism for developing a project concept into a comprehensive project design document. Logframes can also provide the basis for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of a project or programme.
21. The logframe itself is a particularly simple and effective tool when being used to summarise and present projects to people. It is relatively easy to follow and allows people to see how the project is constructed and will be delivered, monitored reviewed and evaluated. This is particularly useful when working with community groups who do not have specific project management training as it provides them with a straightforward chart of how the project will progress.
22. Another of the main benefits of LFA, especially where regeneration projects are concerned, is that it allows for, and in fact actively encourages community participation in the project development process. In this way the local community feel they have increased ownership of the project, increased pride in the project, so ultimately giving the project greater chance of success.
23. To date many users of the LFA in the UK have found it helpful. There are however some disadvantages to the approach. A list of the practical advantages and disadvantages of the approach in the UK programme and project context are presented in Table 2.
24. In summary it is clear that the LFA has come a long way since its early days in the 1970s. The adoption of a participatory approach to its use at all stages of the project or programme cycle is now seen as being critical for its success. Its recent use and uptake in the UK has been successful. However it is important to note that to date the approach has been rather driven by sponsored training programmes. Will the approach last? At this point in time it is hard to know but I suspect others will adopt it and maybe adapt it. Only time will tell.

Table 2 - Summary of Advantages and Disadvantages of Logical Frameworks for HAZ work as perceived by HAZ staff who have used the Logical Framework Approach. (Dearden et al 2001).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical • Helps focus on the time required for good project design. • Helps in the identification of risks and how to manage them. • Highlights weaknesses in project designs • Encourages real partnerships. • Allows monitoring and management of assumptions. • High potential for community involvement. • Systematic and very thorough • Focusing • Helps you clearly identify the real problem • Can decrease bureaucracy and paperwork • Has to include stakeholders • Structures your thinking • Sets up a useful framework for monitoring • Sets up a useful framework for evaluation • Involves stakeholders in all stages • Links activities to purpose etc • Highlights the assumptions being made • The “process” itself is useful • Values peoples contribution through projects to outputs and purpose • Can challenge long held assumptions • Good strategic tool • Useful commissioning tool • Verification process is valuable • Adds real discipline and structure • Clearly defines the links between projects, programmes and strategies • Ensures completeness of a project • Flexible/adaptable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too late for some existing programmes. • Needing to know the Logframes above you. • Controlling. • Assumption that there is partnership. • Can be time consuming • Could be perceived as inflexible • Could generate bureaucracy if not used correctly • The jargon can put some people off • Doesn't fit with existing systems • You need training in the approach

Annex 1

What is a Logical Framework?

1. The logical framework is a simple tool that:-
 - a. Helps organise the thinking in the project and projects purpose.
 - b. Relates activity and investment to expected results.
 - c. Sets performance indicators and the framework for monitoring, review and evaluation.
 - d. Helps allocates responsibility.
 - e. Communicates information about the project concisely and unambiguously.
 - f. Reduces time and effort in project management.
 - g. Utilises the best of experience and creativity. It does not replace the use of competent staff.
 - h. Requires strong facilitative and leadership to ensue real participation by all stakeholders.

2. What does it look like? The end result is a simple table like this

Objectives	Indicators	Verification	Assumptions
Goal			
Purpose			
Outputs			
Activities			

The **goal** is a higher order objective that the specific project or programme will contribute to e.g. the regeneration of Sheffield.

The **purpose** describes the specific purpose and immediate outcomes for the project. This is identified by work to articulate which problem the project is there to address using a problem 'tree'. You are only allowed one clearly defined purpose.

The **outputs** describe what the project will have delivered by the end. They are articulated in the passive e.g. school attendance will have risen.

The **activities** describe what will be done to achieve each output. They are described as activities e.g. to undertake three school truancy sweeps.

The logic of the left hand column is then tested. e.g. If we do these activities, then this output will be achieved. If we deliver these outputs, then this purpose will be achieved etc.

However, other factors may come into play, which may be beyond the control of the project. A detailed risk assessment is undertaken against each of the 4 levels of the frame. These risks are either managed and therefore reflected in the actions column e.g. proactive press releases, briefing for local MPs or they are logged in the right hand column as assumptions. The logic is then tested on the basis of:

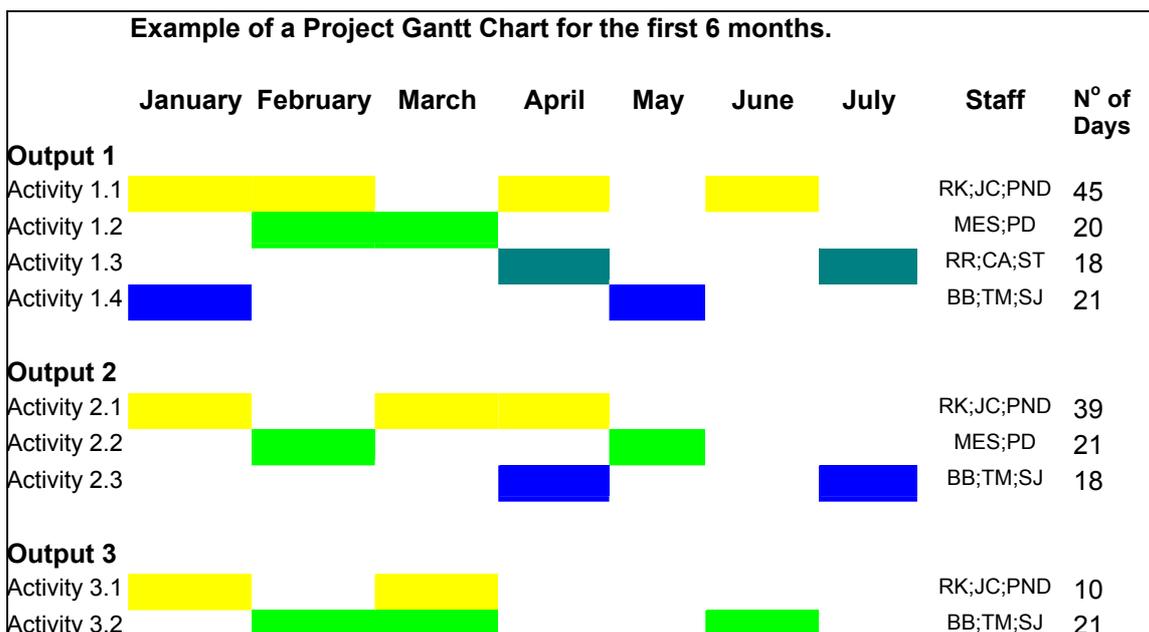
If we do these activities and these assumptions hold, then this output will be delivered. This process is very helpful in managing risk and also in identifying 'killer' risks, which may mean the project is not viable.

The middle 2 columns identify how each level is going to be measured and how that information will be sought. The trick is to identify measures that are necessary and sufficient but not to overdo it. Each measure has to have a quality, quantity and time element in it e.g. to improve school attendance by 10% over 1 year among pupils in homeless accommodation.

The final task is to prepare the performance budget against the activity. This is not part of the 'logframe' but a necessary companion.

The indicators at Activity level can easily be used to outline sub-activities or tasks. These can form the basis of a work plan – often set out as a Gantt chart. Each Output is listed together with its associated activities (sub-activities and/or indicators and milestones are sometimes used as well). Then some form of horizontal bar coding is given against a monthly (or sometimes weekly) calendar.

To this is added other columns such as the identity of the staff who will do the activity; the proposed number of days; priority; rough estimate of cost; etc.. As shown below:



Annex 2

Programme vs Project Approach in an International context (from many varied sources)

PROGRAMME APPROACH	PROJECT APPROACH
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides opportunities for donors to coordinate efforts and harmonize procedures around nationally defined policies and institutions - More support to national policy agendas - Conducive to a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) - Enables donors to practice capacity development and local partners to take the lead - Promotes unified approach and avoids parallel structures - Capital funding through government systems - Common planning and common monitoring - Often long planning and implementation periods (allows for firm establishment of more sustainable results) - Can contribute more directly to policy-making procedures, to establish policy frameworks more conducive to growth and pro-poor development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation more easily expedited - Can focus on quick and tangible results - Can work along with capacity development principles and achieve significant results - Can remain effective for translating programmatic plans into action - Can be an effective testing ground for scaling up promising new practices and innovations - Provide conducive environment for building strong partnerships between local actors and external providers - Allows direct funding of civil society and service providers outside of SWAP framework - Facilitates capacity development of non-state actors - Can more effectively reach the isolated and the poor during periods of insecurity - Can respond quickly to local level crises - Usually afford to hire high quality staff and consultants, selected on basis of merit
Weaknesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires an acceptable government strategy - Dependent upon a reasonable level of government accountability, transparency and administrative competence - Requires a high degree of socio-political and macro-economic stability - Can incur high transaction costs - Responds sluggishly to crises or immediate needs - Inappropriate to test new innovative practices - Not always strong in providing capacity development support - Risks cutting off funding to civil society organizations - Risk ignoring the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged groups - Difficult to remain apolitical - Staff placed on basis of time in service, rather than on merit - Frequent staff transfers detrimental to programme continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate implementation arrangements leads to physical separation from key government partners ('parallel structure') - Where located within a government agency, often as isolated unit (with access to equipment, vehicles, travel and other resources denied to government staff) - Costly and not sustainable in the long term - Often of short-term duration - Communications linkages and relationships with key partners sometimes weak or strained - Operations may be inconsistent with sector policies and host government expectations - Usually follows own rules, procedures, timetables and staff expectations - Sometimes ignores process issues and sustainable capacity-building outcomes

MONITORING, REVIEWING AND EVALUATING

Accountability

We are all accountable for the work that we do. We are accountable for the stewardship of the resources that we have been given; skills, time, money, good health etc. At work, we are accountable to our manager or boss, to whoever pays us. Teaching or health staff are accountable to their clients, their pupils or those needing health care. We are often accountable to a variety of people involved; foremost to the people and communities we serve, but also to others including the authorities and those who provide resources.

Asking ourselves 'How does our progress measure against our objectives?' and 'What is the quality of our service?' are important questions whether we work in business management or community and/or development work.

Lesson Learning

We also need to learn lessons. We need a system to reflect on and analyse performance both:

- on an on-going day-by-day basis so that we can change direction and improve what we are doing, and also
- on an occasional (stop-what-we're-doing-and-think) basis, perhaps quarterly, annually or every three years, when we examine our effectiveness, outcomes and impact so that we can build lessons into future plans.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

It is crucial to plan M,R&E from the outset; e.g. when doing an organisational strategic plan, when planning a project. A system is needed that will answer questions of:

- **relevance** (Does the project address the needs?)
- **efficiency** (Are we using the available resources wisely and well?)
- **effectiveness** (Are the desired outputs being achieved? Is the organisation or initiative delivering the results it set out with?)
- **impact** (Have the wider goals been achieved? What changes have occurred that help targeted individuals and/or communities?)
- **sustainability** (Will the impact be sustainable? Will any structures and processes established be sustained?)

The use of the terms **Monitoring**, **Review** and **Evaluation** varies in different organisations. Be aware that when talking with others, they may use different

words, or the same words may mean different things. A common interpretation of them when used with Logframes is:

Monitoring

The collection and analysis on a regular basis of information for checking performance. This is usually done internally to assess whether inputs are being used, whether and how well activities are being completed, and whether outputs are being delivered as planned. Monitoring focuses in particular on **efficiency**, the use of resources. Key data sources for monitoring will be typically internal documents such as monthly/quarterly reports, work and travel logs, training records, minutes of meetings etc.

Review

A more substantial form of monitoring, carried out less frequently; perhaps annually or at the end of a phase. It usually involves insiders working with outsiders. Review focuses in particular on **effectiveness, relevance and immediate impact**. It assesses whether the activities have delivered the outputs planned and the impact of those outputs; in other words whether there is indication that the outputs are contributing to the purpose of the organisation, project or programme. Reviews set up specifically to examine impact are sometimes called Output-to-Purpose Reviews. 'Review' in many organisations is called evaluation. Key data sources for review will typically be both internal and external documents, such as ½ yearly or annual reports, a report from a stakeholder participatory review event, data collection documents, consultants' reports etc.

Evaluation

In many organisations is a general term used to include review. Other organisations use it in the more restricted sense of a comprehensive examination of the outputs and impact of a initiative; how it contributes to its purpose and goal. Evaluations are usually carried out by both insiders and outsiders in order to help stakeholders and decision makers to learn and apply lessons. Evaluations focus in particular on **impact and sustainability**. They may happen:

- at the end of a phase or initiative (terminal or summative evaluations) to assess immediate impact
- and/or beyond the end of the initiative (ex-post evaluations) to assess the longer-term impact of the initiative and its sustainability.

Key data sources for evaluation will be both internal and external. They may include review reports, consultants reports, national and international statistics, impact assessment reports etc.

Annex 4

Useful websites

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf>

Tools for Development - A handbook for those engaged in development activity, Performance and Effectiveness Department, **Department for International Development** September 2002.

Or <http://www.dfid.gov.uk> and type in “Tools for Development “ in the search facility.

This comprehensive handbook can be downloaded a chapter at a time.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/qsm/index_en.htm

Useful site from EuropeAID (part of the European Union) with link to EU’s project cycle management guide with lots of useful project cycle management tools.

An Introduction to Multi Agency Planning using the Logical Framework Approach. 0-19+ Partnerships and Centre for International Development and Training, University of Wolverhampton.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/search/EP00025/>

Further Training/Facilitation

The Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) of the University of Wolverhampton cidt@wlv.ac.uk offer two and three-day tailor made training courses for groups of staff who want to have full training and develop a usable logical framework for project implementation and management. We also offer trained facilitators who are able to ensure participation of key stakeholders with project teams

Contact CIDT at:

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