



# Chapter 23

## Monitoring and Evaluation

### 1. Introduction

M&E is summarized in this chapter and covered in depth in the *UNAIDS/World Bank National AIDS Councils (NAC) Monitoring And Evaluation (M&E) Operational Manual*. Readers are referred to this manual in the References for detailed M&E guidelines. The MAP does not seek to promote its own M&E system, but to support one overall national M&E system under which MAP supported components fall. The M&E chapter focuses on “program” M&E rather than surveillance of the epidemic and does not include needs assessments, which are discussed under social assessment.

### 2. Why is program M&E important?

Sound M&E is vital in order to:

- **Determine Program Effectiveness:** Since a prime objective of the MAP is to scale up existing programs without the traditional a priori technical assessment of program effectiveness and efficiency, early and comprehensive results from M&E are critical to determine which programs are successful and should be expanded further and which are less successful and should be stopped or provided with capacity building;
- **Identify and Address Problems:** Detect and address problems so that continuous project redesign and improvement become standard operating procedures;
- **Show Impact:** Provide early evidence of program impact;
- **Gather Evidence of Activities and Results:** Gather evidence of activities and results to communicate to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in transparent and objective ways the effort being made to improve prevention, care and treatment, and mitigation programs; and
- **Strengthen Fiduciary Responsibility and Accountability:** M&E is a core part of the fiduciary architecture of financial management, procurement and M&E.
- **Show Transparency:** M&E enables grant-making bodies to establish transparent grant-making and supervision procedures, as well as transparent systems for communicating progress, thus enhancing public confidence in their overall transparency.

### 3. What is M&E?

#### Distinguishing Between M&E

Confusion between M&E is common. There is a simple distinction between monitoring and evaluation that may be helpful. Monitoring is the routine, daily assessment of ongoing activities and progress. In contrast, evaluation is the episodic assessment of overall achievements. Monitoring asks: “*What are we doing?*” Evaluation asks: “*What have we achieved?*” or “*What impact have we had?*”

## M&E Framework

Effective M&E is based on a clear, logical pathway of results, in which results at one level are expected to lead to results at the next level, leading to the achievement of the overall goal.

The major levels are:

- Inputs
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Impacts

These levels are described in the table below:

**Table 23.1**

Level	Description
<b>Inputs</b>	Inputs are simply the people, training, equipment, facilities and resources that we put into a project, in order to achieve outputs
<b>Outputs</b>	Outputs are the activities or services we deliver, including AIDS prevention, care, support and mitigation services, in order to achieve outcomes. The processes associated with service delivery are very important. The key processes include quality, unit costs, access and coverage
<b>Outcomes</b>	Through quality, economical, accessible, widespread services, key outcomes should occur. Outcomes are changes in behaviors or skills, especially safer HIV prevention practices and increased ability to cope with and ameliorate the consequences of AIDS
<b>Impacts</b>	These outcomes are intended to lead to major health impacts. Impacts refer to measurable health impacts, particularly reduced STI/HIV transmission

Results at the final impact tier may take several years to observe, so it is important to set realistic targets at the impact level.

## M&E Components

**M&E consists of the following major components:**

**Table 23.2**

Component	Description
<b>Overall system</b>	A governing flowchart, which describes precisely how data are collected and flow into an overall data base, which integrates the data specified in the flowchart
<b>Surveillance</b>	National biological and behavioral and social surveillance of STI/HIV/AIDS/TB sexual behavior and social rates and trends
<b>Research</b>	Essential prevalence, incidence and evaluation research, to complement national surveillance
<b>Financial monitoring</b>	National financial management monitoring, of NAC, the public sector and civil society's utilization of resources
<b>Program activity monitoring</b>	National program activity monitoring of NAC's contracting and grant-making and the relevance, quantity and quality of public sector and civil society services delivered

These components are related to framework and levels presented above. The overall system encompasses all levels. Surveillance and research provide data primarily at the outcome and impact levels. Financial and program activity monitoring provide data primarily at the input and output levels.

## M&E Strengths

The strengths of each M&E component vary widely:

- **Overall System:** Few countries have an overall M&E system, with a governing flowchart and integrated data base;
- **Surveillance:** Surveillance is well developed in many countries, particularly in countries with mature AIDS epidemics and is well supported by international agencies, which have prepared sound guidelines;
- **Research:** Surveillance should be complemented by essential research. NACs have a strategic role in collating, interpreting and disseminating research findings;
- **Financial Monitoring:** Financial management monitoring is well supported; and
- **Program Activity Monitoring:** Program activity monitoring is the least developed and requires the greatest emphasis. It is addressed partly through operations manuals, but significant challenges remain. NACs will assume a major grant-making role, supporting hundreds of AIDS prevention, care and mitigation activities. They lack essential systems and procedures. Program activity monitoring should be combined with financial management monitoring and contracted to a single independent entity.

### Box 23.1: Role of Global HIV/AIDS Program M&E Team

While UNAIDS is responsible for coordination of global level M&E, the UNAIDS sponsors are funding the World Bank to improve the coordination of country level M&E. In partnership with UNAIDS and other major development partners, the World Bank Global HIV/AIDS Program M&E Team is supporting the coordination of country level M&E capacity building, and providing and brokering M&E technical assistance. The Global HIV/AIDS Program M&E Team have three major foci:

#### Country Support Team Assistance to National M&E Systems

The Global HIV/AIDS Program (GHAP) has recruited and trained a Country Support Team (CST), comprising 10 international M&E specialists to provide support to national M&E systems. Each M&E specialist supports a portfolio of 2-4 countries. Their major task is to promote the recruitment of national, in-country, M&E specialists in their portfolio of countries and thereafter to closely support the national, in-country M&E specialists, through regular field support visits, e-mail and telephone contact. By February, 2004, GHAP's CST had made 85 M&E field support visits to 31 countries/projects, providing approximately 10,000 person hours of intensive M&E field support. The CST assisted NACs to develop M&E frameworks, prepare M&E operational plans, calculate M&E operational budgets, recruit M&E staff and consultants, strengthen bio-and behavioral surveillance, research and program monitoring and establish functioning M&E systems.

#### Rapid Results Initiative

In Eritrea, the Global HIV/AIDS Program M&E Team piloted a highly successful Rapid Results Initiative, which uses M&E as a motivational and performance enhancement tool. Assisted by expert coaches, managers set major goals they wish to accomplish within 100 days, then analyze the steps to achieve these goals. In Eritrea, managers used the Rapid Results approach to eliminate needlestick infections in hospitals and to greatly expand VCT coverage. It is a highly empowering and motivational approach, which has attracted great interest in Eritrea and elsewhere.

#### Community and Program Learning

In Uganda and Ethiopia, the Global HIV/AIDS Program M&E Team is using Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) to assess program coverage quality, coverage and effectiveness. LQAS is a sophisticated sampling technique that allows inferences to be robustly drawn from extremely small samples. It is highly structured and supported by training manuals and field tools, developed and refined over many years. It is also highly participatory, engaging service delivery managers and personnel in the assessment of services. It provides data which enables managers to identify under-performing areas and to make rapid tactical changes to improve performance. LQAS has been extremely successful, for example, in empowering Ugandans to assess the performance of the Community HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI) and to make major tactical changes to enhance its performance.

In summary, the most developed components are: surveillance (especially biological surveillance); research; and financial monitoring. The least developed components are: the overall M&E system; and program monitoring. These components thus require particular attention.

## Putting M&E into practice

The following operational procedures are proposed to put M&E into practice at the implementation level.

- **Establish Incentives:** International agencies should establish incentives for functional M&E systems, by making them a prerequisite for future support. This is a major tenet, for example, of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).
- **Coordination:** NACs should clarify their coordination role and increase their capacity to coordinate not implement M&E;
- **Contracting out:** NACs should adapt a framework in which they contract out implementation of M&E, to specialized entities. Thus, (i) surveillance, (ii) research, (iii) financial monitoring and program monitoring should be contracted to a range of public, private and civil society entities;
- **Program Approval:** It is vital to build implementing agency M&E into the activity approval process;
- **Participatory Process:** NACs and stakeholders should engage in an intensive participatory process, to build ownership and buy-in, particularly for the overall M&E system and program monitoring;
- **Agreeing Targets:** Each implementing partner should agree its key targets with NACs, using a simple Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Form;
- **Monthly Reporting:** Each implementing partner should report results monthly using a simple Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Form;
- **Verification:** These results should be checked and verified at appropriate intervals by the specialized monitoring entity;
- **Assessing Progress:** The specialized entity should assess each implementing partners' progress towards targets every six months and rate their progress using a simple Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Form;
- **Reporting to NACs:** The specialized entity should collate, analyze and submit to NACs six monthly summary reports, using a simple Progress Report Form;
- **Stakeholder Review Meetings:** NACs and key stakeholders should meet regularly to review M&E reports, to ensure utilization of data by all stakeholders, to identify key lessons learned and to make strategic recommendations and decisions; and
- **Updating Manuals and Procedures:** NACs and key stakeholders should update their M&E manuals and procedures based on lessons learned.

## 4. Lessons learned and recommendations

The following key M&E lessons have been learned:

- **Incentives:** Unless there are the strongest incentives to establish functioning M&E systems, they are unlikely to be established. Evidence suggests that “performance based management systems”, such as those required by GFATM, tend to develop M&E systems more reliably and rapidly. The 2004 MAP mid-term review funded by the World Bank recommended that the establishment of a fully functional M&E system during existing MAP grants be a prerequisite for future MAP support.

**Box 23.2: Example of implementing agency M&E**

The Project Support Group (PSG) is a regional organization with its headquarters in South Africa and HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs in eight Southern African countries. Since its origins in 1986, PSG has emphasized sound monitoring, including program activity monitoring, using very simple, practical systems.

This investment in program monitoring enables PSG to demonstrate the scope of services supported to partners and beneficiaries. For example, from 1990 to mid-2001, PSG partner prevention projects recruited and trained 2,467 community educators, conducted thousands of community behavior change communication meetings, reached hundreds of thousands of people, including repeat attendees and distributed more than 140 million condoms. Over the same period, PSG partner care projects recruited 5,400 care trainers, enrolled more than 400,000 HIV/AIDS patients and conducted tens of thousands of care visits. PSG are also able to link their services to important outcomes, including reduced STI transmission and improved coping and quality of life.

The key lesson learned is that by rigorously tracking prevention and care services provided, PSG is able to demonstrate to partners and communities that they are a significant national and regional provider of essential prevention and care services and to use this data to attract increased support from international, government and private sector funders. NGOs who do not track their services miss a vital opportunity to demonstrate how important their services are and to influence policy and funding decisions.

- **Simplicity:** M&E systems should be as simple as possible. Most programs collect far more data than they use. The more complex a M&E system, the more likely it is to fail;
- **Underestimating capacity building needs:** Experience shows that the amount of technical advice and national capacity building required to develop functioning M&E systems have been underestimated. Thus, these components have been under-funded.
- **Funding:** NACs lack comprehensive, long-term funding for all major M&E components, including local costs and incremental operating costs. The World Bank, through MAP credits, may provide comprehensive, long-term M&E funding where grant funding is unavailable. The World Bank recommends that up to 10% of MAP credits be used for the investment and operating costs of a long-term M&E system;
- **Dedicated M&E budget line:** Evidence shows that, unless M&E is protected through a non-fungible component or budget line, M&E allocations tended to be absorbed into general salaries and administrative expenses, leaving no resources for M&E. It is vital to establish a separate, protected, M&E component or budget line.
- **Beyond indicators:** To date, international focus has been on indicator sets and less on the systems required to collect the indicators. MAP programs should move beyond indicator sets, to focus on recurrent M&E systems.
- **Operational plan and budget:** There are many M&E strategy papers. However, one must move beyond M&E strategy papers to develop detailed M&E operational plans, with clear responsibilities, milestones and a fully costed M&E budget. This is a major milestone in the evolution of functioning M&E systems.
- **Stakeholder buy-in:** No matter how sound a M&E system may be, it will fail without widespread stakeholder “buy-in.” Thus, a large-scale, participatory process is essential to build ownership and “buy-in” from the start;
- **Implementing agency capacity:** Implementing agencies often lack appropriate M&E systems and require technical and financial support from the program activity monitoring agency to effectively utilize the proposed M&E system;
- **M&E systems should be operational before activities begin:** M&E must be built into the design of a program and operational when grant-making begins, not added later. It is harder and less effective to “retrofit” M&E after grant-making is underway;

- **Contracting:** Program activity monitoring should usually be combined with financial monitoring and contracted to a single, independent entity, for economy and finance-program cross-verification;
- **Standardization:** M&E systems must include a standardized core. If each implementing partner uses different systems or tools, data cannot be coherently summarized. The need for a standardized core does not preclude individual implementing partners from collecting additional, situation-specific M&E data<sup>52</sup>;
- **M&E for management:** Many MAPs have tended to focus on longer term goals, which are not helpful for immediate program management needs. One should establish shorter-term milestones, in which one specifies and measures what will be achieved after three months, six months, one year and so on. This makes M&E more central to decision making.
- **Internal assessment and external verification:** M&E requires both internal self-assessment and external verification. Thus, implementing partners should collect their own internal data and an external entity should verify the completeness and accuracy of the data. Supervisory visits should be based on the analysis of internal self-assessment and externally verified primary data.
- **Use M&E to learn lessons:** A major lesson is to design mechanisms to use M&E lessons to improve future programming.



See Annex 23 (CD-ROM) for further references and sub-manual on National AIDS Councils Monitoring and Evaluation Operations Manual

<sup>52</sup> The sponsors of UNAIDS, including the World Bank, have endorsed the notion of “one agreed country level monitoring and evaluation system.”