DEVELOPING SKILLS OF NGOS

Evaluation and Monitoring

Written by
ROZALIA BAKO

Edited by
ILDIKO SIMON and CERASELA STANCU

THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe
About the REC

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Center fulfills this mission by encouraging cooperation among non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, by supporting the free exchange of information and by promoting public participation in environmental decision-making.

The REC was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. Today, the REC is legally based on a Charter signed by the governments of 27 countries and the European Commission, and on an International Agreement with the Government of Hungary. The REC has its headquarters in Szentendre, Hungary, and local offices in each of its 15 beneficiary CEE countries which are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Recent donors are the European Commission and the governments of Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as other inter-governmental and private institutions.

The entire contents of this publication are copyright
©2002 The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

No part of this publication may be sold in any form or reproduced for sale
without prior written permission of the copyright holder

ISBN: 963 9424 21 8

Published by:
The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
Ady Endre ut 9-11, 2000 Szentendre, Hungary
Tel: (36-26) 504-000, Fax: (36-26) 311-294
E-mail: info@rec.org, Web site: <www.rec.org>

Editing: Steven Graning, Design: Sylvia Magyar, Illustration: Laszlo Falvay

This and all REC publications are printed on recycled paper or paper produced
without the use of chlorine or chlorine-based chemicals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Material</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to Train</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Toolkit</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool 1: Evaluation Indicators</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool 2: Key Informant Interview</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool 3: Evaluation of the Training to Date</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool 4: Training Toolkit: Who Am I? Who Are We?</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool 5: Training Evaluation Questionnaire Design</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool 6: The Magic Pen</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Workshop Agenda</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topic Material
Overview
Introduction

The main weakness of programme and project management in South Eastern European countries is incomplete, neglected or superficial monitoring and evaluation. The lack of managerial experience, both in business and civil society, leads to short-term approaches focused on providing resources rather than seeking effectiveness. Managers and organisers are often more concerned with fund-raising than effectively implementing a project according to standards of quality and cost-effectiveness. “Let’s get the money and than we’ll see,” is heard all too often.

Monitoring and evaluation are becoming increasingly important for non-profit organisations as key issues in organisational management. High expectations are confronted by scarce resources, placing considerable pressure on policy-makers, managers and organisers. Communities, beneficiaries, funders and the organisation itself expect quality and efficiency in resource management. In order to meet these expectations, monitoring and evaluation are indispensable managerial instruments.

Evaluation and evaluators are still seen as inconvenient elements of managerial work rather than practical tools for well-directed change. Both managers and organisations need to understand that systematic monitoring and evaluation help develop flexible planning and implementing strategies that are adapted to the turbulent environment of social action.

Managers and organisers are often confronted with questions and challenges both from inside (members, staff, board) and outside the organisation (beneficiaries, volunteers, funders, partners and the general public). Frequently posed questions include:

- Are the resources being used properly?
- Are the results in line with the efforts?
  Ideally, great input leads to great results (with minimal waste of resources).
- Are the services meeting the beneficiaries’ expectations?
  Sometimes they expect not more, but maybe something else…
- Was the money spent properly?
  The funder wants to know that the funds were spent in accordance with the original proposal.

In order to answer these questions, organisations undertake evaluations. Before doing any evaluation, however, relevant information must be gathered systematically, which is the process of monitoring. An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, its implementation and its results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.
Objective of the Guide

This guide aims to provide NGO managers and organisers with a comprehensive and practical understanding of monitoring and evaluation. Although applicable to policies and programmes as well, the approach is **focused on projects**. Monitoring and evaluation are connected to the broader topic of project management and to the more specific topic of project proposal writing.

A successful trainee will be able to:

- identify the project’s beneficiaries;
- ensure that beneficiaries and the project team are satisfied;
- track the project’s budget and personnel’s time used;
- gather information about who exactly uses the project’s services;
- prepare a progress report at any time; and
- measure the effects of the project’s activities.

Skills to be Developed

The training guide provides models and tools for developing methods of evaluation and monitoring, building the skills needed to design and implement these activities, such as:

- communication;
- planning;
- information management; and
- leadership.

The guide helps develop the ability to:

- conduct planning and evaluation discussions with the project team and beneficiaries;
- ask the appropriate questions to discover further needs and expectations;
- establish priorities;
- set measurable goals and objectives;
- ensure a healthy flow of information within the organisation;
- communicate effectively with outside users;
- gather all relevant data and develop management systems;
- delegate tasks to team members;
- provide the project team with a healthy work environment; and
- assess the team’s performance.

Content

The guide explains the terms and methods involved in evaluation and monitoring. It also includes approaches to designing and implementing effective evaluation and monitoring strategies, with an agenda and exercises to aid the progress of the workshop.
Communication skills
When gathering data during monitoring work, interviewing beneficiaries of a project, or compiling information into comprehensive analytical reports, good communication skills are essential. Messages must be sent in a clear and meaningful manner. Collecting and analysing feedback is also critical.

Planning skills
Monitoring and evaluation activities are instrumental to the success of the project’s design and implementation. When writing a project proposal, keep in mind that funders want to see clearly how inputs, outputs, outcomes or impacts of the project are going to be monitored and evaluated. Managers have to anticipate the amount of change they want to make within a certain length of time, with certain resources (inputs) and at a certain level of quality.

To conclude, a successful project must ensure the following elements:

- established priorities, which are the most urgent/important aspects to monitor/evaluate; and
- specifically designed and measurable objectives both for direct project activities and for monitoring and evaluation.

Information management skills
Given the confusing and time-consuming amount of data provided by information and communication technologies (ICT), activists and leaders are expected to be able to find, structure and present clearly relevant information. When handling information, it is essential to:

- focus on relevant data;
- use reliable sources; and
- analyse data critically.

Leadership skills
The task of monitoring and evaluating projects requires general and specific leadership skills, whether carried out by a project team or by external experts. The following abilities and managerial skills are essential when managing human resources:

- delegating authority;
- motivating staff;
- organising team work; and
- assessing performance.

Because a large amount of data is needed for monitoring and evaluation, considerable human resources (from inside and outside of the organisation) must be coordinated, planned and led to concrete results. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation are not simple routines of collecting and compiling data, but more and more an art of handling people and their knowledge.

Figure 1 contains some important concepts when working with evaluation and monitoring. These components are general and form the main basis on which to evaluate a project or a programme. In practice, the evaluation components will have to be given a specific context in relation to the project under consideration.
Evaluation relies heavily on information collected regularly during the implementation phase of the project. To improve project management, it is important to ensure systematic collection of data with a monitoring and evaluation system designed for that project.

Delivering the Training

The guide should be used in combination with the activities presented in the training toolkit. Most of the guide’s content is designed in a way that can be used as a handout or reader for the participants during the training session. The trainer may, however, adapt it to the specific context and time frame of the training activity.

Ready to Train

Understanding the Concepts of Monitoring and Evaluation

The task of assessing policies, programmes or projects is usually assigned to people inside and outside the organisation:

- **Internal**: project team, executive team, board;
- **External**: independent experts, funders, authorities.

#### Concepts for Evaluation and Monitoring

- **Goal** is the main overall objective that the project is meant to achieve in the long run. It provides the rationale for using resources in a certain project. Those involved must keep the goal in mind because it provides a basis on which to assess achievements. It is important to formulate the goal in such a way that the target groups are clearly specified.

- **Outputs** are produced by a project as a consequence of its activities. A common error in project management is to confuse outputs with the goal, thus confusing what the project is supposed to produce in reality with the result one hopes to achieve hypothetically.

- **Inputs** are the funds, personnel, materials etc. invested in a project. Inputs may be provided by the donor/funder or the organisation, and include everything necessary for a project to carry out the activities planned and achieve the intended outputs.

- **Assumptions** here are all those events, conditions or decisions beyond the control of the project but which are expected to occur. Assumptions should be described as positive conditions along the same lines as objectives and outputs. If a project is dependent on major assumptions that are also unlikely, the project should not be started unless the dependence on such assumptions can be substantially reduced by using a different strategy.

- **Efficiency** is a measure of the outputs of the project — qualitative and quantitative — in relation to the total resource input. It shows how economically the various inputs are converted into outputs. Efficiency is a measure of the productivity of the implementation process: i.e. to what degree the outputs achieved derive from efficient use of financial, human and material resources. The main difficulty in measuring efficiency is determining the standard for measurement. The evaluation team might choose to set standards related to:
  - comparable projects elsewhere;
  - experience with other projects; or
  - specified reasonable criteria.
Both members and non-members of organisations have advantages and disadvantages. Figure 2 provides some general rules to remember in this matter.

**The Algorithm of Evaluation**

Evaluation is more a complex process than a single activity. In order to ensure success (reliable data, pertinent conclusions, objectivity), this process has to be well planned, designed and implemented.

When planning an evaluation, the following questions need to be addressed:

- **What is the purpose of evaluation: learning or control?**
  
  Both are beneficial for organisational development: evaluation for learning is aimed at improving planning, organising and implementing organisational goals and objectives, whereas evaluation for control is a current management tool aimed at meeting stakeholders’ expectations. Evaluation for learning is more internally driven, whereas evaluation for control is often done under external pressure (stakeholders).

- **Who is the recipient of the evaluation: the organisation, the funder or the beneficiaries?**

**Effectiveness** is a measure of whether the purpose of the project has been achieved or the degree to which the outputs have contributed to achieving the goal. It shows if the project is heading in the planned direction. Assessing effectiveness is part of the ongoing monitoring of the project. In order to measure the objectives of a project, they need to be specific, measurable and time-bounded. Often, objectives may be unclearly formulated and very general. A typical example is “improved living conditions.” In these cases the evaluation team should have operational objectives based on the existing project documentation. Expected results should be concrete and explicit: in the given example: “three-room apartments for 50 families with small children from city X.”

**Impact** means the foreseen and unforeseen consequences of the project. Assessment here relates to the goal and purpose of the project and requires comprehensive investigation. It may be especially problematic to prove that observable changes are due to a certain project. Different impacts may occur at various times. An evaluation should consider both short-term and long-term effects. Impact evaluation is often undertaken while the project is still in operation. In these cases, long-term impacts may be difficult to predict. An infrastructure project shows quicker impact than, for instance, an educational one.

**Relevance** is an overall assessment of whether the project is in line both with the organisation’s and the funder’s priorities. This is intended to clarify if the project should be accepted, rejected or reformulated. Relevance is an issue of vital importance, because it measures the degree to which project priorities match the broader priority context. A change in the external conditions may mean that the project is now accorded lower priority. For instance, once a political conflict has been solved, this may mean there is no more need for a refugee camp.

**Sustainability** is an overall assessment of the extent to which the positive changes due to the project are expected to last (durability of success). Sustainability is thus a higher-level test of the project’s success. Funders are putting increasing emphasis on long-term perspectives and lasting improvements. Sustainability relates to what happens after the project has been completed. Thus it will be difficult to provide any sure assessment of sustainability as long as a project is still underway or recently completed. Assumptions have to be made about future developments on the basis of available knowledge regarding the project and the local community.

---

*Discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.*
— Marcel Proust
Their needs and interests are different, and evaluation criteria and indicators should be designed accordingly. For instance, the same service offered by a project (free Internet access for HIV-infected children) is assessed from three different perspectives — the funder would be interested in the number of beneficiaries, the cost of the service and the effects. Beneficiaries are interested in the quality of the service (access, hours, speed, assistance). The organisation might be concerned with whether this service is in line with organisational goals and objectives.

- What do we intend to evaluate: a policy, a programme or a project?

The more general the level aimed at, the more a complex and accurate evaluation design is needed. It is easier to evaluate a project than a policy: less information and time are needed.

### FIGURE 2

**Pros and Cons of Using Insiders and Outsiders for Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insiders</td>
<td>more related knowledge</td>
<td>less objectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsiders</td>
<td>more objectivity</td>
<td>less related knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Their needs and interests are different, and evaluation criteria and indicators should be designed accordingly. For instance, the same service offered by a project (free Internet access for HIV-infected children) is assessed from three different perspectives — the funder would be interested in the number of beneficiaries, the cost of the service and the effects. Beneficiaries are interested in the quality of the service (access, hours, speed, assistance). The organisation might be concerned with whether this service is in line with organisational goals and objectives.

- What do we intend to evaluate: a policy, a programme or a project?

The more general the level aimed at, the more a complex and accurate evaluation design is needed. It is easier to evaluate a project than a policy: less information and time are needed.

### FIGURE 3

**Issues Faced When Designing an Evaluation**

- Which aspects should be evaluated? Criteria and indicators should be chosen according to the purpose, recipient and level of evaluation.

- What data is needed? This requires designing proper instruments to gather relevant data for evaluation criteria and indicators — quantitative or qualitative.

- What sources of information are best? Best practice suggests combining formal and informal, official and private sources of information for better topic coverage.

- What methodology should be employed to collect data? We might choose simple and inexpensive methods, or more sophisticated and resource-consuming ones, according to the goal and the budget constraints.

- How should the data be interpreted? Figures and numbers make little sense by themselves. In order to make them relevant, it is necessary to build them into the evaluation context: “25 percent growth” — of what? Compared to what? Of which time period? Proving what? With what impact?

- How shall we assign tasks within the evaluation team? If we choose more sophisticated evaluation methods, we will need special competencies to implement them (to design a questionnaire, to lead a group discussion, etc.). But even simple tasks like monitoring attendance should be clearly allocated to team members.

- What timetable shall we work out? Monitoring should be an ongoing activity, shadowing the whole project implementation process. As for data processing and compiling, they should be specified explicitly in the project timeline.
• Who is carrying it out: the project team or independent experts or both?

In most cases, both parties are involved, and their backgrounds, perspectives and interests are different. It is important to negotiate a common understanding of what is to be evaluated (criteria) and how (along which indicators).

Several issues must be addressed when designing an evaluation. Figure 3 provides a checklist of questions and suggestions that a project manager needs to keep in mind.

Implementing an evaluation involves several steps:

• organising and instructing the evaluation team;
• systematically gathering the required data;
• organising and structuring information to be interpreted;
• analysing data and drawing conclusions; and
• presenting results in the evaluation report.

There are actually three stages involved in the evaluation process. Reviewing data before the actual evaluation begins can play a critical role in ensuring that the team is heading in the right direction. Data must be collected and scrutinised before evaluation begins, and it is important to be critical of the statements and figures that are presented as factual. Figure 4 provides some advice on how to tell whether data is relevant or reliable.

---

**Figure 4**

**Characteristics of Relevant and Reliable Data**

**ESSENTIAL**

- Linked to central elements that can describe project progress;
- Describes important issue-areas;
- Suitable to the needs of the users as a basis for improving management.

**AVAILABLE**

- Builds on information already registered;
- Avoids time- and resource-consuming studies.

**INEXPENSIVE**

- The results justify the costs;
- Optimal balance between size of sample and reliability when using field research.

**UP-TO-DATE**

- Relevant concerning the project components;
- Based on latest information from acknowledged (authorised) sources.
Strategic Thinking about Evaluation

“Evaluation is a burden,” managers often complain. Indeed, systematically following the ongoing project and reporting its results takes a considerable amount of time and effort. However, a well-planned and carefully designed evaluation framework is beneficial to the organisation and its stakeholders.

**The benefits of evaluation**

Evaluation improves organisational development on strategic, tactical and operational levels:

- **Strategically** it helps in matching short-term and long-term organisational objectives;
- **Tactically** it contributes to the use of resources for a better fulfilment of objectives;
- **Operationally**, it helps to build more realistic time schedules and budgets.

**Project goal hierarchy (PGH)**

A project can be defined as a planned process designed to achieve certain changes within a given time through the use of certain resources. A project can be seen as a cause-and-effect chain at four levels:

- **Inputs** are the various resources applied to produce the intended results (outputs).
- **Outputs** are the immediate results that the project should guarantee.
- **Purpose** is the major positive change intended by the project.
- **Goals** are the long-term benefits of implementing the project.

**The evaluation components**

The purpose of evaluations is to make assessments at an aggregate level. It concentrates on a few, central criteria, called the evaluation components. The key components of evaluation are familiar to us from project proposals: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability.

- **Efficiency**: maximising results from the available resources (converting inputs into outputs);
- **Effectiveness**: achieving objectives (specific, measurable, timed);
- **Impact**: long-term positive and negative effects of the project;
- **Relevance**: compatibility in a broader context; and
- **Sustainability**: the long-term viability of the project.

**Evaluating results strategically**

Promoters, beneficiaries and funders of a project are interested in producing and announcing both short-term and long-term results. Resources are scarce and competition is high. Thus, organisational success is measured along five criteria, defined according to the PGH-model, as described above. Evaluation builds to a considerable extent on information collected on a continuing basis during the implementation phase of the project. To improve project management, it is important to ensure systematic collection of data, by means of monitoring and evaluation system designed for that project.
Evaluation criteria and indicators

Each of the five evaluation components can be designed from different perspectives, according to the purpose (learning or control), the level (policy, programme or project), and the recipient (beneficiaries, funder, the organisation) of the evaluation. These perspectives determine the evaluation criteria we choose. **Criteria** define what exactly will be assessed: **resources** involved, **activities** carried out, **results** achieved and **effects** of the intervention. Indicators are “measurement units” (quantitative or qualitative) of the selected criteria: “number of,” “percentage of,” “level of,” (satisfaction, involvement, attendance, weeks, costs, resolved cases, press coverage, etc.). From the funder’s perspective, the most assessed resources are time and money (respecting timelines and budget-lines). Another important highlight is the achievement of objectives. In order to be easily assessed, objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

Factors to consider in financial analyses

For obvious reasons, good project management involves careful analysis of financial resources. It has become common practice to employ a co-funding policy and a long-term approach to financial resources and cost-benefit requirements. When analysing project feasibility in financial terms, it is necessary to gather information on three main aspects: **financial sustainability, cost-effectiveness** and **cost-benefit analysis**.

Preparing and Evaluation Instruments and Methods

**Preparing the evaluation work plan**

The evaluation work plan is an instrument aimed at providing a clear description of who will perform the evaluation, as well as what, when and why.

**Preparing evaluation questions**

The main problem areas must be discussed to determine which aspects will be evaluated and the questions that will be answered.

**Preparing evaluation methods**

Methods for evaluating the project’s achievements must be chosen carefully. Criteria and indicators for this assessment must follow logically.

**Work plan**

A work plan must be written that clearly describes the timetable for activities, which team members will be involved and how the tasks will be divided.

**Documentation**

Keeping proper track of an organisation’s activities is a critical part of monitoring and evaluation work. Very often project teams neglect to keep track of document resources, activities, results or impacts of their projects. In order to identify the level of change produced, it is vital to have the following components on hand:

- a systematic review of existing information and key informants;
- a project description/aim, objectives and activities;
- a chronological presentation of project phases and major ongoing changes;
- updated budgets;

Financial Analysis

- **Financial sustainability**: Are there sufficient funds to cover future costs after current support is withdrawn? For this, information on operating and maintenance costs is needed, as well as on available grants and allocations.

- **Cost-effectiveness**: Could similar results have been achieved at a lower cost? You need information concerning:
  - costs of project and project components;
  - alternative means to accomplish tasks; and
  - costs of similar projects elsewhere.

- **Cost-benefit analysis**: Can the costs of the project be justified in terms of benefits produced? This requires information on:
  - goods and services produced;
  - work-saving;
  - socio-cultural benefits; etc.
copies of key project documents;

• summaries of previous project assessments; and

• requests for information from project team members and other relevant parties.

Figure 5 provides a convenient checklist of items to consider when carrying out an actual evaluation. Keep in mind that this list is by no means exhaustive. It is instead a minimal skeleton of activities to be assigned and carried out.

Some formal evaluation methods
Formal evaluation methods are those that are scientifically valid, currently used by researchers and considered reliable and valid. When major changes are about to be implemented — and major resources are involved — it is justified to use more scientific methods, such as formal surveys, participant observations and direct measurements. They involve considerable resources in terms of expertise, time and money.

Commonly used simplified methods
Most middle range projects cannot afford resource-consuming evaluation methods. In these cases simple, yet reliable, methods suffice for project assessment. Interviews are commonly used techniques aimed at gathering information in a structured and focused way: key informants, groups and focus groups can provide valuable and valid data to rate achievement. Direct observation and informal surveys, if used properly in terms of focus, can also provide powerful data to document change accomplished by the project. Figures 6 and 7 lists some characteristics of formal and informal techniques.
## Pros and Cons of Formal Evaluation Methods

### FORMAL SURVEY
- Includes use of written and oral interviews/questionnaires;
- Advantage: pre-defined questions and issues;
- Limitation: data-collection is a demanding process.

### DIRECT MEASUREMENT
- Registration of quantifiable or classifiable data by means of analytical instruments;
- Advantage: precise, reliable, often inexpensive;
- Limitation: registers facts, not explanations.

## Pros and Cons of Informal Evaluation Methods

### KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS
- Provides general, descriptive information from individuals;
- Advantage: flexible, in-depth approach;
- Limitation: risk of subjectivity.

### GROUP INTERVIEWS
- Generates direct information about people affected by the project;
- Advantage: low-cost, efficient, direct contact;
- Limitation: discussions can be manipulated.

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS
- For analysis of specific, complex problems;
- To identify attitudes and priorities in smaller groups;
- Advantage: creative, efficient;
- Limitation: demanding method; risk of bias.

### DIRECT OBSERVATION
- Inspection, field visits, observation of using infrastructure, services;
- Advantage: provides deeper insights;
- Limitation: dependent on observer’s understanding and interpretation.

### INFORMAL SURVEY
- Quantitative surveys of small samples; non-probability sampling procedures;
- Advantage: reasonable and rapid means of getting quantitative data;
- Limitation: risk of generalisation and sampling errors.
Various dissemination approaches

After monitoring, reviewing and evaluating project achievements, it is time to compile, present and store relevant data. There are several formats available for these processes: summaries, bibliographies, annual reports, thematic reports, seminars and databases.

- Summaries: descriptions of projects or activities, with conclusions and recommendations;
- Bibliographies: annual inventories of surveys, short bibliographies on evaluation reports;
- Annual reports: summaries of the year's activities and finances;
- Thematic reports: presentations of themes, with examples from special studies;
- Seminars: presentations and discussions of results with those involved in the project;
- Databases: electronic collections of data that can be accessed easily.

The most common data presentation formats are evaluation reports (Figure 8 provides a standard format). An actual report will likely be adapted to fit the precise character of the study.
A Standard Format for Evaluation Reports

TITLE PAGE
- Name of project (official designation)
- Type of evaluation (phase evaluation, final, impact study)
- State of report (draft or final version)
- Client of evaluation (for whom the report has been prepared)
- Authors (individual or corporate names)

SUGGESTED CONTENTS
- Executive summary of conclusions and recommendations (4-6 pages)
- Introduction
  - Background for evaluation;
  - Brief description of the project;
  - Evaluation methodology used — in detail;
  - Structure of report.
- Project Relevance
  - Context and rationale for initiating the project;
  - Changes in project context during implementation;
  - Relevance of project in relation to regional/local priorities;
  - Relevance in relation to donor priorities.
- Efficiency
  - Project progress compared to plans;
  - Cost and use of resources compared to budget and plans;
  - Achievements;
  - Results in relation to resource utilisation.
- Effectiveness
  - Objectives when project was designed;
  - Actual achievement of objectives;
  - Factors affecting the achievement of objectives.
- Impact of the project
  - Local priorities, needs and demands;
  - Foreseen and unforeseen effects on target group and others;
  - Impact on institutional level;
  - Factors explaining impact of project.
- Sustainability
  - Extent to which project will become sustainable;
  - Factors affecting sustainability (political, financial).
- Lessons learned
  - Operational lessons (related to project itself);
  - Developmental lessons (related to broader cultural context).
- Conclusions and Recommendations
  - Conclusions (facts);
  - Recommendations (future).
Training Toolkit
Tool 1: Evaluation Indicators

**Description:** Designing measurement instruments of the five project evaluation components: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability

**Participants:** Five equal groups

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Handouts for each participant and a flipchart

**Procedure:**

1. Participants indicate, based on the standard evaluation report format, the elements which might measure success of the five components of the same imaginary project.

2. Each of the five groups receives responsibility for the design of one component.

3. At the end of the exercise each group writes its own ideas on flipchart paper. The facilitator gives support to the five groups, helps them formulate ideas and gives explanations when necessary.

**Discussion**

Each group briefly reports their findings back to the large group.
Tool 2: Key Informant Interview

**Description:** Identifying key informants and asking them relevant questions about the project

**Participants:** Entire group

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Ask five trainees to volunteer for the following roles: project evaluator, beneficiary, local community member, media representative and funder’s representative. They form the inner circle. The rest of the group is the outer circle of observers.

2. The project evaluator asks two or three questions about an imaginary project from each key informant (e.g. Are you satisfied by the accomplishments? Are the results cost-effective?). Answers may be contradictory.

3. Observers are instructed to note discrepancies between the different perspectives.

4. The trainer acts as a moderator and intervenes only if conflict arises between key informants or with the project evaluator.

**Discussion:**

Observers express their impressions of discrepancies and similarities.
Tool 3: Evaluation of the Training to Date

**Description:** Assessing the learning progress and difficulties encountered by trainees to date

**Participants:** The whole group

**Duration:** Five to seven minutes

**Materials:** Questionnaires

**Procedure:**
1. Have participants fill in the questionnaire openly, honestly and anonymously.

2. The following types of questions should be asked:
   - What were the most important things you learned from the activities?
   - Which difficulties did you face?
   - Which moment was the most powerful for you personally?
   - Questions, suggestions, comments.

**Discussion:**
Begin the following day by giving a short summary of the feedback from the group, using the opportunity to address any problems, misunderstandings or requests.
Tool 4: Who Am I? Who Are We?

**Description:** Evaluating and expressing self-images and group-images

**Participants:** Small groups

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Participants write down six things (characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, etc.) about themselves — three things as organisers and three things as individuals.

2. Then, in groups of three or four, participants share their self-assessments with their team members.

3. Have each group try to express through body language a generalised picture of the entire group. That is, the group must synthesise the individual components (people) to give a collective image of themselves, much as an organisation would.

**Discussion:**

Is an organisation more than a sum of its parts? Is it more than the sum of the people working for it? How much should an organisation adapt to the strengths of its workers? Did the group images in the exercise reflect the individual members of the group?
Tool 5: **Training Evaluation Questionnaire Design**

**Description:** Practicing key evaluation skills: communication skills

**Participants:** Four equal groups

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart paper and a marker for each group

**Procedure:**

1. Ask each group to select one of the criteria to be evaluated: content, process (group dynamic), facilitation or logistics of the training.

2. Each group has 20 minutes to design a set of relevant questions for the selected criteria and writes them up on the flipchart.

3. The facilitator highlights the best formulated question for each group and discloses that they have just designed the evaluation questionnaire for this very training and will be asked to answer the four categories of questions in the next session.
Tool 6: The Magic Pen

**Description:** Finding a meaningful and fruitful way to close the training and provide useful feedback to the trainer

**Participants:** As a group, seated in a circle

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** A “magic pen”

**Procedure:**

1. Pass the magic pen and ask each participant in turn to disclose his/her feeling about the learning process in one sentence.

2. Thank the trainees for their involvement and sincere comments, and close the training.
Sample Workshop Agenda
How to Deliver the Training

This sample agenda is intended to further help you tailor a training event on evaluation and monitoring using different elements of this manual and toolkit. The exact use of it, in combination with other activities, should be based on what you know about the expectations and experiences of your trainees, as well as on the time available to carry out the training activity. In addition to the training topics, the sample agenda proposes activities that can provide interactive elements to your training event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Workshop Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1 Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CATEGORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of participants and trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2 Financial Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CATEGORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3 Methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CATEGORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation work plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation for monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Workshop Agenda continued

Part 4 Group Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>Introducing the subject</td>
<td>Anecdotes, lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Reviewing the material to date to highlight main points</td>
<td>Trainer writes the main ideas on the flipchart as seen by the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the day</td>
<td>Learning how to improve the first half of the training</td>
<td>Tool 3 Evaluation of the Training to Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 5 Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
<td>Encouraging participants to evaluate themselves</td>
<td>Tool 4 Who Am I؟ Who Are We?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation skills</td>
<td>Introducing evaluation skills</td>
<td>Lecture/presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation in practice</td>
<td>Practicing evaluation skills</td>
<td>Pair/group work, discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 6 Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Introducing the basics of report drafting</td>
<td>Lecture/presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information management</td>
<td>Exploring different ways to manage information</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project evaluation difficulties</td>
<td>Overcoming problems in project evaluations</td>
<td>Small group discussions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 7 The Algorithm of Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation process</td>
<td>Appreciating the complexities of the evaluation process</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group output</td>
<td>Evaluating training group output</td>
<td>Draft reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Final questions on evaluation</td>
<td>Open forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 8 Closing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Creating a questionnaire design</td>
<td>Tool 5 Training Evaluation Questionnaire Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final training</td>
<td>Filling out questionnaire and discussion</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Final comments and feedback</td>
<td>Tool 6 The Magic Pen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (REC) is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Center fulfills this mission by encouraging cooperation among non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, by supporting the free exchange of information and by promoting public participation in environmental decision-making.

The REC was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. Today, the REC is legally based on a Charter signed by the governments of 27 countries and the European Commission, and on an International Agreement with the Government of Hungary. The REC has its headquarters in Szentendre, Hungary, and local offices in each of its 15 beneficiary CEE countries which are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Recent donors are the European Commission and the governments of Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as other inter-governmental and private institutions.