Draft Rainbow Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation

This Draft Rainbow Framework is an output of the first phase of the Global Partnership for Better Monitoring project. Its aim is to incorporate the monitoring function into the existing BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework. It draws on feedback from a survey and discussion group responses about what is needed for better monitoring.

You can read more about how this was developed and why in this blog: www.betterevaluation.org/ blog/what-do-we-need-better-monitoring

MANAGE a monitoring and evaluation system or a single evaluation event This includes identifying how the monitoring system integrates with existing management and monitoring systems and who will make decisions about an evaluation or the monitoring system.
Understand and engage stakeholders: Who needs to be involved in the monitoring system or evaluation? How can they be identified and engaged? How will you obtain their buy-in to the monitoring and evaluation system?
Integrate systems: To what extent and how will the monitoring and evaluation system integrate and align with existing systems, including those of national or local organisations? How will it harmonise with available data sources and data collection cycles?
Identify or establish decision making processes: Who will have the authority to make decisions about the monitoring and evaluation system? Who will have the authority to make what type of decisions about the system? Who will provide advice or make recommendations about the monitoring system or evaluation? What processes will be used for making decisions?
Decide who will do what in the monitoring and evaluation system: Who will design and implement the M&E system? Who will collect, manage and analyse the monitoring data and who will use it? Who will actually undertake the evaluation?
Determine and secure resources: What resources (time, money, and expertise) will be needed to design, implement and manage implementation of the monitoring system or for the evaluation and how can they be obtained? Consider both internal (e.g. staff time) and external (e.g. participants' and partners' time) resources.
Define ethical and quality standards: What will be considered high quality and ethical data collection, storage and use of data? How will you manage privacy, minimise intrusion and meet 'do no harm' principles? How should ethical issues be addressed?

Document management processes and agreements:

How will the monitoring system or evaluation's management processes and agreements be documented?

Design and document the monitoring and evaluation system or the evaluation:

How will the monitoring system or evaluation be designed? What planning documents need to be created (monitoring and evaluation framework, monitoring and evaluation implementation plan and timeline, evaluation design, evaluation work plan, monitoring work plan, monitoring and evaluation budget)?

Operationalise the monitoring and evaluation system:

What needs to be done to implement the monitoring system and integrate it into existing systems? How will you orient the various teams with their responsibilities?
(See also **Understand and engage stakeholders** and **Support use)**

Review and refine the monitoring and evaluation system or the evaluation event:

How will you review and refine the existing M&E system, or the system that is developed, to check it is providing the information that is needed and the information is used appropriately? How will changes in the system be identified and agreed? How will each evaluation be evaluated including the plan, process and report?

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation capability and culture as needed:

How can the ability of individuals, groups and organisations to conduct data collection, analyse data and use monitoring information be strengthened? How can the ability of individuals, groups and organisations to conduct and use evaluations be strengthened? How will you go about shifting the institutional culture in your and partner organisations to value evidence and associated monitoring and evaluation systems?

DEFINE what is to be evaluated or monitored

Develop a description (or access an existing version) of what is to be monitored or evaluated and how it is understood to work.

Develop initial description:

What exactly is being evaluated or monitored? Is it (or is it part of) a project, program, policy, organisation, sector, country level program? How do these relate to each other and to key partners?

Assess and refine or develop programme theory / logic model:

How is the intervention (or program, policy etc) understood to work (program theory, theory of change, logic model)? What are the intended results? What are the associated risks - in terms of not producing intended results?

Identify potential unintended results:

What are possible unintended results (both positive and negative) that will be important to address in the evaluation or monitoring system?

FRAME the boundaries for an evaluation or monitoring system

Set the parameters of the evaluation or monitoring system – its purposes, key evaluation or monitoring questions and the criteria and standards to be used.

Identify primary intended users:

Who are the primary intended users of this monitoring and evaluation system? What are their needs? When and how frequently do they need the information?

Decide purpose:

What are the primary purposes and intended uses of the monitoring information generated by the monitoring system or the evaluation findings or recommendations? To what degree will monitoring information be used for informing management decisions and program implementation, learning purposes, accountability (including to partners, participants, donors and organizationally), and/or for public relation purposes?

Specify the key monitoring and/ or evaluation questions:

What are the high level questions the monitoring system or evaluation will seek to answer? How can these be developed? What combination of descriptive, causal, evaluative, predictive and action questions are needed to meet the purpose? How do they relate to each other? Are they sensitive to gender, disability and other factors?

Determine what 'success' looks like:

What should be the criteria and standards for judging performance? Whose criteria and standards matter? What process should be used to develop agreement about these?

COLLECT AND MANAGE data

Collect, quality assure and store data in an ethical, accessible and timely way.

Sample:

What sampling strategies will you use for collecting information or data?

Collect or retrieve data:

How will you collect information or evidence about activities, outcomes, context, and other factors? Do you need indicators or other measures? Are there existing measures that should be used or will you need new indicators or measures? Who will collect the data? How will monitoring visits be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation system?

Ensure quality standards are met:

How will you check and ensure data quality?

Ensure ethical standards are met:

How will you ensure ethical standards are met in data collection, storage and analysis?

Manage data:

How will you organise and store quantitative and qualitative monitoring data? How will you make sure it is accessible for a later evaluation?

ANALYSE AND INTERPRET data
Analyse data to answer different types of key evaluation or monitoring questions.

Answer descriptive questions:

How will you analyse the data to answer questions about the activities of the project/program/ policy, results, the context in which it has been implemented, the risks associated with implementation and achieving results?

Answer causal questions:

How will you explain what has produced or contributed to the outcomes and impacts that have been observed?

Analyse evidence to answer evaluative questions:

How will you reach conclusions regarding merit, worth or significance?

Analyse evidence to answer predictive questions:

How will you decide if are you on track to achieve higher order results? How might these results be reasonably extrapolated or generalised to other sites and time periods?

Analyse data to answer action questions:

How will you decide what should we do? Are changes needed to improve performance? Will the evaluation include recommendations? How will these be developed and by whom?

SYNTHESISE data at different scales, levels or across organisations
Analyse data across different levels or organisations to drawn meaningful conclusions.

Synthesise data across evaluations:

Do you need to synthesise data across evaluations? If so, how should this be done?

Synthesise monitoring data:

Do you need to synthesise data across multiple interventions, or at different levels and scales? If so, how should this be done?

USE AND SUPPORT USE

Use and support use of evaluation or monitoring findings by the intended users for the purposes of the monitoring or evaluation.

Ensure accessibility:

How can the monitoring information and findings, or the evaluation report be easy to access and use for different users?

Develop reporting media:

How will the monitoring or evaluation findings be used to tell the performance story? What types of formats will be appropriate for the intended users? If a formal report is required what timeframe and format is needed?

Share learning:

How will you share the learning generated from answering monitoring or evaluation questions with the relevant users?

Support use:

How will you support the use of monitoring and evaluation findings? What processes will be used or established to ensure the information generated through monitoring is analysed and informs management decisions and regular reporting and learning events? How will you track implementation of agreed implementation changes and ensure the action decisions are implemented?