



CARIFORUM-EU
EPA CSME

STANDBY FACILITY FOR CAPACITY BUILDING



MONITORING FOR PERFORMANCE RESULTS

**KEY CONCEPTS
AND PROCEDURES**

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EPA & CSME Standby Facility: PROJECT DELIVERY CYCLE-

monitoring, evaluation and reporting are integral functions in the cycle

PHASE 1:

CDB issues a call for applications



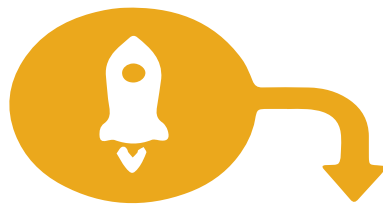
Potential implementing partners submit concept notes based on the goals and objectives of the facility.

An internal review is conducted and concept notes are evaluated based on a set criteria.



PHASE 2: Review and evaluation

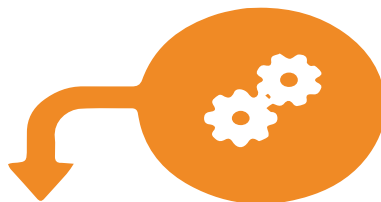
PHASE 3: Project appraisal and approval



Projects are appraised by consultants and CDB, and submitted for approval and no-objection. A grant agreement is prepared and sent to the executing agency for review and sign off.

Monitoring and Reporting are prioritised in the phases below.

Project implementation and monitoring of activities commence based on an approved results monitoring framework.



PHASE 4: Project implementation

PHASE 5: Reporting on actual vs expected results - outputs and immediate outcomes



Project coordinators report performance on a quarterly basis. Reports are examined by CDB for data quality issues and achievements in meeting targets.

Project coordinators submit a final report detailing overall results/outputs achieved against results monitoring framework (RMF), including outcome evaluation.



PHASE 6: Project close out

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring involves collecting and analysing project information as well as tracking, measuring, and reporting on project implementation performance in relation to expected results to be achieved within a given time frame. Monitoring helps decision makers and other stakeholders identify project implementation bottlenecks, course correct and make appropriate management/strategic decisions towards the successful project completion, delivery of development outputs and greater achievement of development outcomes and results. Monitoring and reporting also promote greater accountability and transparency to project partners and stakeholders.

Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (MER) are critical management activities required to support the implementation of the CARIFORUM-European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Standby Facility for Capacity Building. These functions form part of the Facility's project delivery cycle and the results based management (RBM) approach, which is intended to promote better decision making and greater focus on results.

This document speaks to key concepts and procedures for use by project coordinators in designing and performing all of the Facility's MER activities. Also, it is intended to be employed by national administrations/agencies involved in EPA and CSME implementation including national focal points, national EPA implementation units and agencies with responsibility for EPA related project implementation in CARIFORUM states.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION WITHIN THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are integral parts of the project management cycle, and if used carefully, can help to strengthen project design and implementation. Also, it can stimulate partnerships and deepen engagement with stakeholders. Moreover, impact management can be improved if reliable information is available regarding the progress of activities and their outcomes¹.

¹International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2002. *Managing for Impact in Rural Development: A Guide for Project M&E*.

WHAT IS MONITORING AND EVALUATION?

Monitoring and evaluation are two distinct organisational activities that are synergistic and interdependent ².

Monitoring can be described as a continuing process that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators, to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention, with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds ³.

Monitoring is sometimes referred to as **process evaluation** because it focuses on the implementation process and asks the following key questions:

- How well has the programme been implemented?
- How much does implementation vary from site to site within the project?
- Did the programme benefit the intended people?
- At what cost?



²Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2002. Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No. 6 - Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (in English, French and Spanish) <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264034921-en-fr>

³Ibid.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of a planned, ongoing or completed intervention, its design, implementation and results ⁴.

The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, and the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the intervention ⁵.

An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process ⁶.

One or more of the following criteria will be considered during evaluation⁷:

- **Relevance:** Did the project address the needs of community members?
- **Efficiency:** Did the project do so in a manner that was as low-cost as possible?
- **Effectiveness:** Did the project change existing practices in a beneficial manner?
- **Impact:** What was the effect of those changes?
- **Sustainability:** Are the changes sustainable?

It should be noted, some Standby Facility projects may have post-training evaluations, namely, feedback/surveys from participants/project beneficiaries. The surveys are a means of verification or evidence of improved knowledge or to support change in behaviour, attitude etc. as outlined in the RMF.



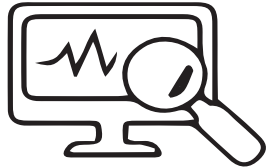
⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Catholic Relief Services. 2011. "Chapter 10: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)" In *Institutional Strengthening Guide*. <https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/crs-files/institutional-strengthening-10-monitoring-evaluation.pdf>

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN



Monitoring

Provides information enabling management and staff to assess implementation progress and make timely decisions.

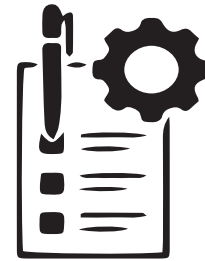
Is concerned with verifying that project activities are being undertaken, services are being delivered, and the project is leading to the desired behaviour changes described in the project proposal.

Is an internal project activity.

Is an essential part of good day-to-day management practice.

Takes place during the implementation phase.

Generally, focuses on the question "Are we doing things, right?"



Evaluation

Relies on more detailed data e.g. from surveys or studies, in addition to that collected through the monitoring system, to understand the project in greater depth.

Assesses higher level outcomes and impact and may verify some of the monitoring activities. Evaluations should explore both anticipated and unanticipated results.

Can be externally led (particularly end-of-project evaluations), though they should involve the active participation of project staff.

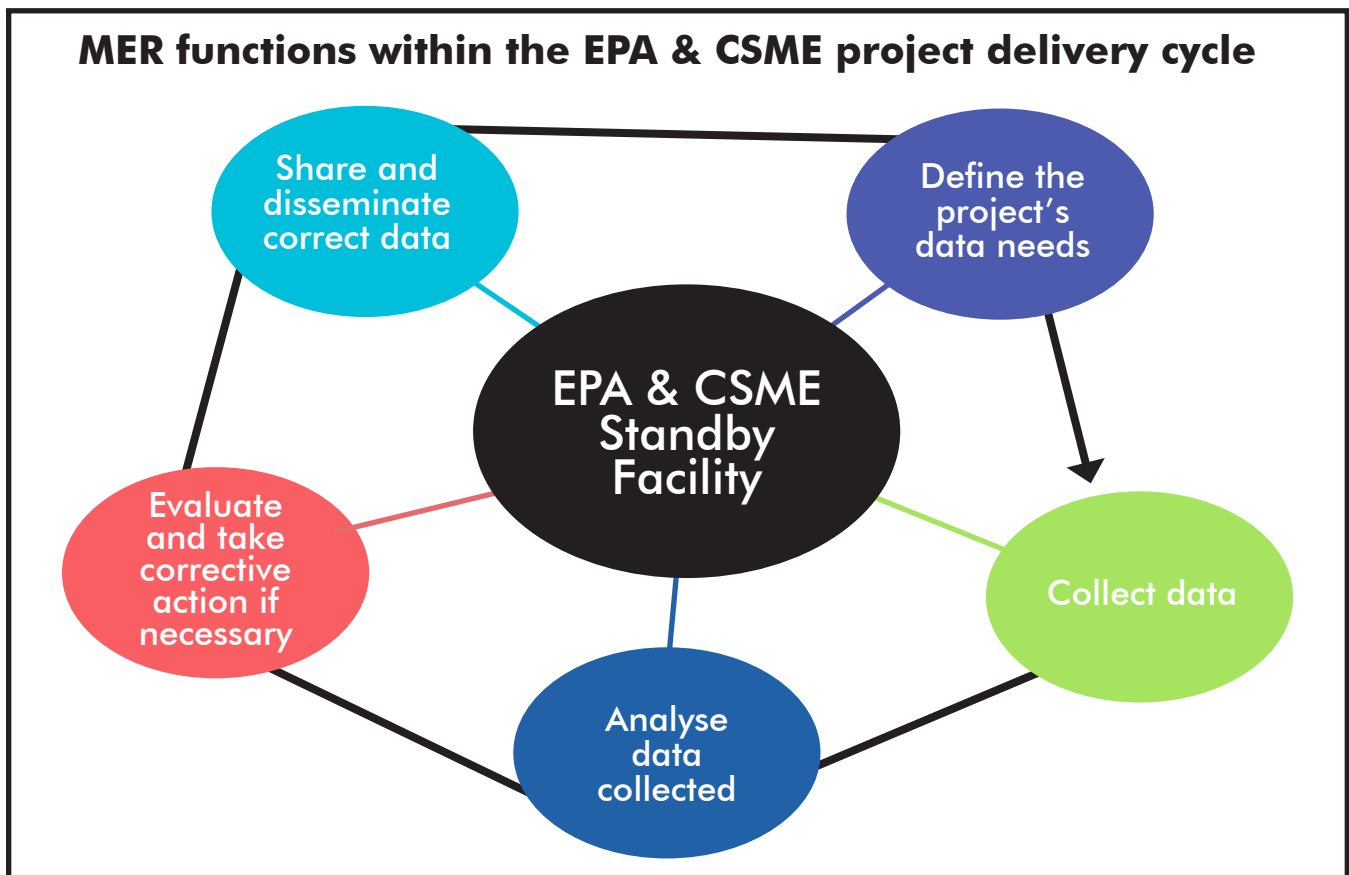
Is an essential activity in a longer-term dynamic learning process.

Occurs at pre-determined points during implementation and also after project completion e.g. post evaluation (looking at long-term outcomes and impacts).

Generally, focuses on the question "Are we doing the right thing?"

EPA & CSME STANDBY FACILITY MER FUNCTIONS

All projects should aim to adopt some of the overarching tasks related to monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, which collectively presents a cyclical model for achieving maximum project development impact. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting are part of the overall project management system; however, the Facility's MER cycle seeks to underscore a set of cyclical, related functions that are key to successful project implementation. Each function is carried out by projects at different stages within the Facility's project delivery cycle (mainly during activity implementation) and provides information at each level for decision making.



- **Define the data needs:** fully establish what are the goals, objectives and the problem the project is trying to solve. This will assist in helping to identify the data that is needed.
- **Collect data:** fully develop indicators; data collection tools; data collection, storage, and retrieval procedures; and incorporate data collection lessons from the data collection process.
- **Analyse the data:** data collected and stored in project databases must be compiled and analysed for results, knowledge and decision making.

- **Evaluate and take corrective actions:** data should be evaluated against project objectives. Incomplete and inaccurate data must be fixed. Corrective actions must be taken to improve the processes and procedures, to prevent a reoccurrence.
- **Data sharing and learning:** data collection by itself should not be the only purpose of your project’s MER system. The collected data should be shared with internal and external stakeholders to highlight progress and to aid in effective decision making.

The cycle outlined above fits into a larger framework that comprises continuous functions that seek to better manage results at various performance levels within a project – output, outcome, and impact. Each level of result corresponds to a different degree of change in the project. Further, this framework describes the necessary inputs. It then explains how these inputs will enable the realisation of certain activities and the achievement of outputs. It culminates in a description of outcomes and impact. These results form a hierarchy and are logically linked through a cause-and-effect relationship. The consolidation of each level of performance is described within a results monitoring framework.

THE RESULTS MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Managing for development results is only possible if reliable information regarding the progress of activities and their outcomes, the reasons for success and failure, and the context in which these activities are taking place, are available. These processes can all be managed within a monitoring framework that best suits the project’s overall goals and objectives.

A monitoring framework is a key element of a MER system that depicts the components of a project and the sequence of steps needed to achieve the desired outcomes. It helps increase understanding of the project’s goals and objectives, define the relationships between factors key to implementation, and delineate the internal and external elements that could affect its success ⁸. It is important that projects financed under the Facility utilise such a framework to fully understand and analyse results at each performance level. Every Standby Facility project is required to have an approved results monitoring framework that clearly outlines the links between inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact.



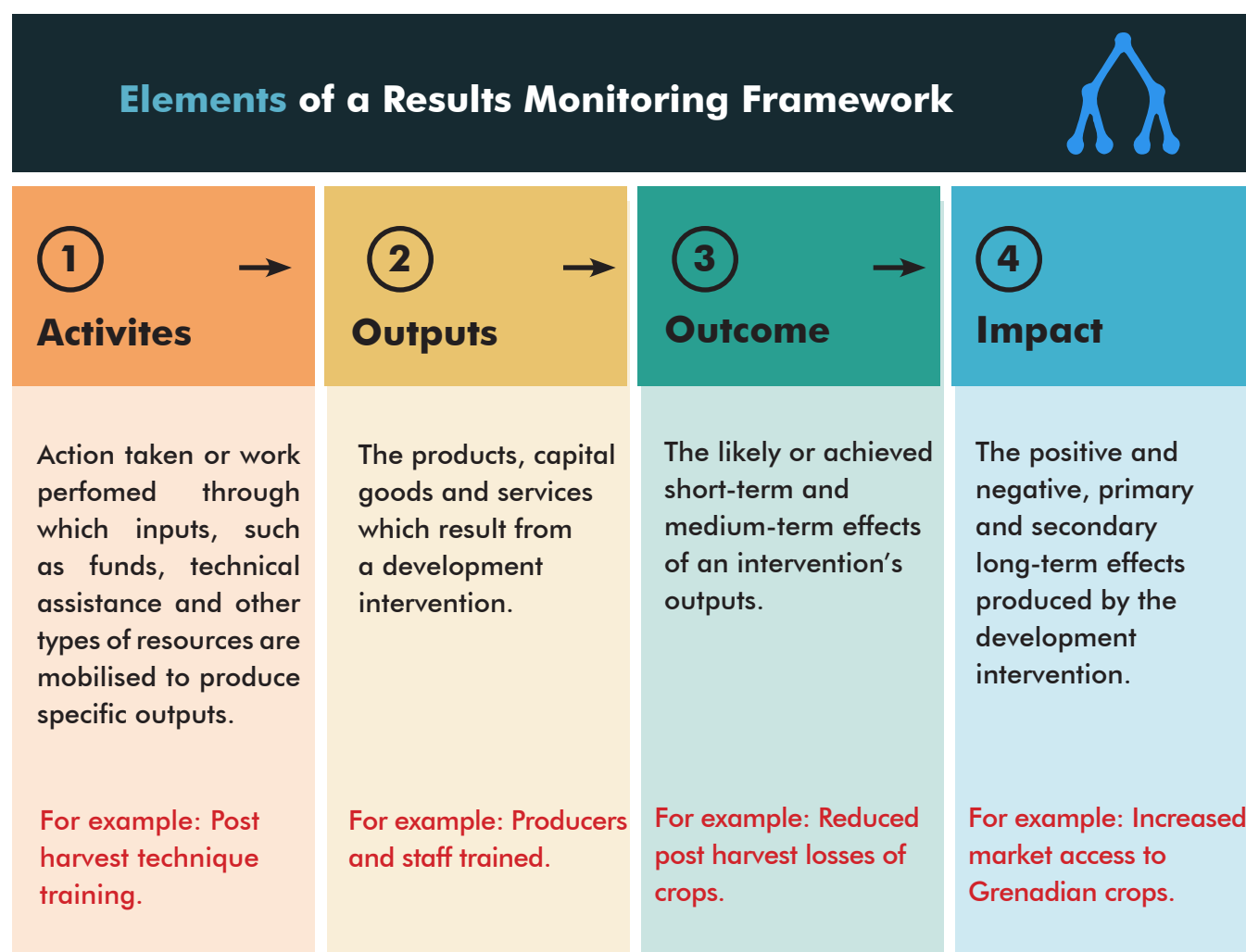
⁸Frankel & Gage. 2007. *M&E Fundamentals: A Self-Guided Mini Course*.

https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/publications/ms-07-20-en/at_download/document

A results framework is a graphic portrayal of a strategy that explains how the intervention will achieve the objective(s), including causal relationships and underlying assumptions and risks. Generally includes: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts ⁹.

Results are typically defined through indicators, which are often quantitative or qualitative in their measures. **For example, the number of staff members who attended the training (quantitative measurement), in contrast to, staff members reporting improved knowledge because of the training (qualitative measurement).**

Additionally, it should include baseline values and targets for expected outputs and outcomes and specify the measures/sources that will be used for data gathering to ensure that the results framework is updated with information at key points during programme/project implementation. The development of a robust results framework requires clarity with respect to the theory of change for the project that will lead to the desired outputs; outline why those outputs are likely to lead to the immediate or intermediate outcomes; and how those outcomes are linked with longer-term outcomes or impact as graphically illustrated below.



⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2002. Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No. 6 - Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (in English, French and Spanish) <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264034921-en-fr>

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN THE EPA & CSME STANDBY FACILITY

In order to manage for development results, a project's MER system should track actual performance against the targets outlined in the results monitoring framework, so as to effectively identify implementation bottlenecks, course correct and make appropriate management decisions during implementation. Consequently, within the EPA & CSME Standby Facility, various performance measures are in place to support projects delivering results based on outlined objectives, which allows the Facility to properly measure and report on the achievements/setbacks at both the activity and project levels.

At the project implementation stage, project coordinators should carefully analyse the results for early learning opportunities to identify successes/setbacks, which can lead to future improvements. In addition, establish that the following components are in place:

- Clearly defined, actionable, and measurable goals at every level of the results chain.
- Established baselines from which progress towards the attainment of goals can be measured.
- Accurate, repeatable, and verifiable data; and,
- Feedback systems to support continuous improvement of an organisation's processes, practices, and results.

In short, project success at the output level can be measured as the ability to complete the project:

- According to the terms of reference,
- Within the specified budget, and
- Within the promised time schedule.

The tools used to measure project performance within projects financed by the Facility are:

- An approved work plan and schedule.
- A regularly updated work plan.
- Results monitoring framework.
- Performance reporting – quarterly and end of project.



DATA STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL IN THE EPA & CSME STANDBY FACILITY

M&E data are routinely used to inform decision making¹⁰. As a result, project performance data needs to be properly stored and processed, to be retrieved and shared, either physically or electronically. For this reason, all Standby Facility projects have been equipped with a performance monitoring and reporting tool (PMRT). This is an electronic database that is updated on a quarterly basis by project coordinators, to allow project stakeholders (both internally and externally) to have access to the latest performance results, for management and decision making. All project-level databases are part of a wider centralised data management system established by the Facility, to collect, store, analyse and report on the overall activity-level performance indicators. Therefore, project coordinators are encouraged to regularly update the PMRT which is the main data collection tool used to collect, store and analyse data within the Facility's MER cycle.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENTS IN THE EPA & CSME STANDBY FACILITY

Robust MER systems can produce high quality data, that is, data that are complete, accurate, timely etc. However, ineffective systems will produce data that are incomplete, inaccurate, and tardy, which may result in incorrect insights, skewed analysis, and decision making that is not based on sound evidence. Therefore, to properly assess data quality, both internally and externally, projects being funded under the Facility are encouraged to conduct regular data quality assessment exercises, with the involvement of internal and external project stakeholders.

Data Quality Assessments

Data quality assessments (DQAs) help project coordinators to understand how confident they should be in the data used to manage the project and report on its success. It focuses on applying the data quality standards (reliability, validity, integrity, precision, timeliness) and examining the systems and approaches for collecting data, to determine whether they are likely to produce high quality data over time.¹¹ In other words, if the data quality standards are met and the data collection methodology is well designed, it is likely that good quality data will result.

Data Quality Standards

- **Validity:** Data clearly and adequately represent the intended result
- **Integrity:** Data have safeguards to minimise risk of transcription error or data manipulation
- **Precision:** Provides sufficient and appropriate details (includes variables required for analysis: e.g., sex, age, according to the guidelines for each country)
- **Reliability:** Collected through standard procedures and protocols/guidelines
- **Timeliness:** Reported by the established deadline

¹⁰ Intrac: for civil society. 2019. *Data-and-Knowledge-Management*.

<https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Data-and-knowledge-management.pdf>

¹¹ USAID. 2010. *Performance monitoring & evaluation tips: Conducting data quality assessments (1st ed.)*.

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadw118.pdf

The Data Quality Assessment Process

Step-by-step approach towards assessing the quality of your project's data.



STEP 1 Identify the DQA team

Appoint a team lead. This person can be the project coordinator or M&E person on the project. Support can be provided by other persons that are part of the data collection and reporting process.



STEP 2 Develop an approach and schedule

The team leader must convey the objectives, process, and schedule for conducting the DQA to team members. This allows for full examination and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the data.



STEP 3 Identify the indicators to be assessed

Compile a list of all indicators to be assessed. This list can include all of the project's indicators or those suspected to have data quality issues.



STEP 4 Hold working sessions to review results from identified indicators

Review each indicator against the data quality standards, including the data collection systems and processes. Identify data quality issues or concerns.



STEP 5 Prepare DQA report based on findings

Highlight key data quality issues that are important for internal and external stakeholders. Summarise recommendations for addressing data quality issues.



STEP 6 Prepare DQA report based on findings

Ensure that there is a process to follow-up on actions. Some actions may be addressed internally, others might need external intervention.

CONCLUSION

Reliable, accurate and timely data is at the centre of monitoring, evaluation and reporting. However, it is useless if it is not of a high quality and does not serve its intended purpose.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting, when implemented effectively, are three of the most important aspects of ensuring the success of a project. Additionally, having strong MER systems amongst projects, creates a platform for quality data to be generated as well as for accountability and value for money to be demonstrated throughout the project continuum.

Projects financed by the EPA & CSME Standby Facility should, therefore, seek to develop suitable MER systems, utilising the concepts shared, to fully maximise data capabilities and performance results.

The Standby Facility will continue to create knowledge management products and support organisational learning in MER, through this document, and with the building out of training outputs.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Baseline The conditions existing prior to an intervention or at the beginning of the period, against which changes/variations can be measured, monitored, and evaluated.

Feedback The transmission of findings generated through the evaluation process to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons from experience.

Goal The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute.

Indicator A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Intervention Objective The overall purpose of an intervention. This includes the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other results that an intervention is expected to achieve or to which it is expected to contribute.

Performance Indicator A variable that allows the measurement and verification of changes in the development intervention or shows results relative to what was planned.

Performance Measurement A system for assessing performance of development interventions against stated goals.

Performance Monitoring A continuous process of collecting and analysing data to compare how well an intervention is being implemented against expected results.

Programme Evaluation The evaluation of a set of interventions, combined to attain specific global, regional, country, or sector development objectives.

Target An objective, usually quantitative, defined as a value on an established performance indicator.

Theory of Change The way the intervention is expected to achieve or achieves change. It consists of a series of “if...then” statements and represents how people understand change to occur in a given context, including explicit (or implicit) assumptions about the causal links between inputs and results, activities and effects.

For additional definitions of terms see: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2002. *Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No. 6 - Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (in English, French and Spanish)*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264034921-en-fr>

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