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| **TOOL SUMMARY: LWR Project M&E Systems Monitoring Tool** | |
| Purpose | The purpose of this tool is to help orient monitoring trips around M&E deliverables. It outlines key monitoring objectives and principals and provides a checklist for gathering M&E related content during the monitoring visit. |
| Information Sources | **Information the monitoring team should have before starting Project Monitoring:**   * Project proposal including the Project Design Workbook. * Detailed M&E Plan ( Includes Matrix, Baseline, ITT and ATT) * Project progress reports * Past project monitoring reports |
| Who | Project monitoring can be conducted both by LWR Country Office, Regional, and HQ staff.   * Project monitoring is usually conducted by the LWR country Project Manager or the Country Director. * Any LWR HQ staff traveling to the field should view his/her trip as a monitoring trip and should develop monitoring objectives accordingly. |
| When | Project monitoring is conducted on an ongoing basis once project implementation begins.   * Monitoring schedules/timeframes are developed by the LWR Country Office based on their operating procedures or are developed based on donor requirements. |
| Requirements | **Requirements:**   * Project monitoring is required to be compiled into a report and shared with supervisors. Follow regional guidelines and standards. * If the donor requires a monitoring template, then the monitoring objectives should respond to the content required by the donor. Nevertheless, additional information useful to LWR, for example M&E monitoring, can be documented in a separate internal monitoring report.   **Recommendations:**   * It is recommended that specific monitoring objectives be developed and shared with partners before undertaking a monitoring visit. * Work closely with partners to finalize the monitoring schedule in advance. * The Reflection Meeting is a recommended method to help analyze the project’s progress and can generate the content for the monitoring report. * It is recommended that a monitoring report be submitted within two weeks of the monitoring visit to ensure that the recommendations and follow up remain relevant to all stakeholders. * It is recommended that project monitoring reports, with information on M&E monitoring, be shared with partners and saved in the project files at HQ. |
| Tips | * Use the Reflection Meeting Guidance to help understand how the ITT and ATT are used to analyze project progress. * As circumstances change, monitoring can also help determine whether initial project objectives remain relevant and appropriate. * Review the M&E Plan Matrix, ITT and ATT in advance before departing on your monitoring visit to help outline your objectives. * During the reflection meeting, review and discuss each outcome and output and their respective indicators. * Try to be as specific and quantitative as possible |
| How to Address Gender Issues | * In developing monitoring objectives, examine indicators to identify where there are significant differences in men’s and women’s participation and performance in activities * Prioritize gender-related challenges that need to be addressed and identify mid-course corrections * Identify lessons learned about gender-relate successes or challenges * The GIG Implementing sheet provides some guidance on examining gender-related issues during monitoring. |

**What is Monitoring?**

1. Monitoring is a systematic and continuous process of collecting, analyzing, and documenting information relevant to ensuring the quality of the project and that the project is progressing as planned towards achieving its results.
2. Monitoring does not only happen when a staff person travels to visit the project.
   * Monitoring also happens through review of project documents and conversations with staff over the phone or email.
3. Monitoring is not a mechanism to identify problems and penalize project staff for not meeting targets.
4. Monitoring is not a way to get to know basic project details.
   * This should be done through document reviews before any official monitoring is conducted.

**What are Monitoring Principles?**

1. Implementing a project is complex and requires much attention to detail. Monitoring trips should always seek to provide added value.
2. Certain concepts behind M&E (unintended outcomes, assumptions) are regularly overlooked by project staff. Monitoring should help illuminate these and provide value to the project.

**What are the objectives of M&E monitoring?**

1. General project monitoring can include many things including monitoring of budget expenditure, management, administration and human resources, etc. All monitoring is important and is ultimately linked. These objectives ensure that key M&E monitoring objectives are considered during project monitoring.

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| **OBJECTIVE** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 1. To provide information to the project team that can be used during the reflection meeting or to complement the Project Progress Report. | The information collected during monitoring should complement, not duplicate, the monitoring information collected by project staff. Identifying clear objectives before the trip, which are agreed to by the partners, will help avoid duplication. The findings from the monitoring visit should be documented and be used to help inform the project progress analysis during the Reflection Meeting. |
| 1. To follow up on challenges encountered towards achieving the project’s results from the previous reporting period. | Some project challenges are more difficult than others. LWR staff may be well placed to help partners address or analyze certain challenges. Prioritizing challenges to respond to or analyze with the partners before the monitoring visit will ensure the most pressing challenges receive the most attention. |
| 1. To ensure that the project is making progress towards achieving its results. | Project staff are often very busy and involved in implementing activities. Monitoring visits are an excellent opportunity to work with project staff to explore how the activities are influencing the achievement of project Outputs and Outcomes. |
| 1. To help project staff identify any unintended outcomes. | The activities that are chosen during the project design do not always lead to the results we expect, in particular at the Outcome level. Often times project staff, in particular those conducting activities (social mobilizers, field officers, community knowledge workers) encounter these unexpected/unanticipated results.  During monitoring visits, and linked to Objective 3 above, LWR staff can explore with project staff whether the activities that have been implemented are leading to the Outputs and Outcomes outlined in the Logframe or to results that were unanticipated/unexpected. These results can be either negative or positive. |
| 1. To monitor project assumptions. | Assumptions are very important aspects of the project design and validate the project’s theory of change. Unfortunately they are often forgotten after the project begins implementation, despite their ability to significantly impact the ability of the project to achieve its results.  During monitoring visits LWR staff can explore with project staff whether the project’s assumptions still hold true. If they don’t, they can help explore what implications that has for the project’s ability to achieve its Outputs, Outcomes and Goals. |
| 1. Check on the data collection systems and do spot checks to validate the data. | The project must often collect a significant amount of data when implementing its M&E system. It is important to validate the completeness and accuracy of this data.  LWR staff can do spot checks on the project’s data collection system during monitoring visits to ensure the system is functioning well and is provided accurate and complete data. |
| 1. To check on the planning and implementation of key M&E deliverables. | There are various M&E deliverables that need to be implemented during the project life cycle. Many of these deliverables need very careful planning to be successful.  During field visits LWR staff can help initiate discussions about planning for M&E deliverables, can provide input and feedback on the planning, and can ensure that each activity is being effectively managed. |
| 1. To assess project compliance and quality. | Many projects have a series of activities to implement in a particular order for greatest results. The partner may need support to adhere to discussions during the Design or Planning phase about activity prioritization.  During visits, LWR staff can get a sense of which activities have gone well and which have not in order to gauge whether and to what degree relevant outcomes will be achieved. Working with the partner to solve implementation problems with the related output and outcomes in mind can help improve both activity implementation and results-oriented thinking. |
| 1. To determine whether recommendations from outside the project have been implemented. | Project staff may receive feedback from consultants, LWR, donors, and other during the course of a project. LWR staff should work closely with project teams to understand that feedback, determine which feedback is most appropriate and what actions to take to implement the feedback.  Before visits, LWR staff should look at any recent reports or notes from other LWR staff, consultants, or other outside contacts who may have provided feedback to the project team. Bring the feedback to the visit and ask if the staff have received other feedback you may not be aware of. Talk through key feedback and develop a workplan with deadlines and assigned roles. If during the previous visit included implementation of such feedback, check to see if its implementation is progressing according to the workplan. |
| 1. To understand the gender-related dimensions of implementation. | Addressing gender issues during the implementation of a project is necessary to understand if activities and interventions are reaching both men and women equitably. Ongoing monitoring and reflection can help us identify problem areas and allows staff to make mid-course corrections. |

**Monitoring Checklist**

KEY: Remember, not all objectives and checklist elements are required for every monitoring visit. The objectives and checklist elements should be used based on the point in which the project falls in the project cycle.

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| **OBJECTIVES AND CHECKLISTS** | **YES** | **NO** |
| **Objective 1:** To provide information to the project team that can be used during the reflection meeting or to complement the Project Progress Report. | | |
| * Did you read the most recent project progress report? |  |  |
| * Did you identify monitoring objectives and share them with the partner? |  |  |
| * + Do your monitoring objectives meet any donor requirements? |  |  |
| **Objective 2:** To follow up on challenges towards achieving the project’s results from the previous reporting period. | | |
| * + Do your monitoring objectives respond to action items, questions, or challenges posed in the most recent progress report? |  |  |
| **Objective 3:** To ensure that the projects are making progress towards achieving their results. | | |
| * + Are you clear about which results (activities, outputs, outcomes) the project should be achieving, as originally planned, at the time of your monitoring visit? |  |  |
| * + Have you validated the results documented in the progress report from the most recent period with project staff? |  |  |
| * + Did you collect additional information, analyze the causes, and provide support to project staff on major challenges faced from the previous reporting period. |  |  |
| **Objective 4:** To help project staff identify any unintended outcomes. | | |
| * + Do you have time scheduled to talk to project field staff (social mobilizers, community knowledge workers, etc.)? |  |  |
| * + Did you ask project staff if they have seen any results coming from the implementation of activities that are not related to the project’s outputs or outcomes? |  |  |
| * + If you have encountered unintended outcomes, are they positive? |  |  |
| * + If you have encountered unintended outcomes, are they negative? |  |  |
| **Objective 5:** To monitor project assumptions. | | |
| * + Are you clear about the project’s assumptions and risks as outlined in the Logframe? |  |  |
| * + Are the project’s assumptions still holding? |  |  |
| * + If the assumptions have become reality, does this affect the project’s ability to achieve its results by the end of the project? |  |  |
| * + Are there any assumptions or risks not identified in the project’s logframe that are affecting project progress? |  |  |
| **Objective 6:** Check on the data collection systems and do spot checks to validate the data. | | |
| * + Do the project staff that you met with have the M&E templates developed at the beginning of the project and outlined in the M&E Matrix? |  |  |
| * + Are project staff or stakeholders at all levels (ex. project coordinator, social mobilizers, cooperatives) collecting all the data assigned to them in the M&E Matrix? |  |  |
| * + If you met with project participants, is the data gathered from them and documented in the project databases the same (data validation)? |  |  |
| * + Are the aggregated numbers in the project database the same as those entered into the project’s Indicator Tracking Table (ITT)? |  |  |
| **Objective 7:** To check on the planning and implementation of key M&E deliverables. | | |
| * + Has the M&E Matrix been completed? |  |  |
| * + Has the Baseline been conducted? |  |  |
| * + Have targets been finalized and entered into the Indicator Tracking Table? |  |  |
| * + Have all data collection templates (reports and databases) been developed for the project? |  |  |
| * + Has an evaluation plan been developed for the project that outlines how all the M&E deliverables fit together and contribute to a final evaluation? |  |  |
| **Objective 8:** To assess project compliance and quality. | | |
| * Are the project’s deliverables being implemented according to the design? |  |  |
| * Are activities that have been prioritized getting sufficient attention? |  |  |
| * Are activities being implemented well? |  |  |
| **Objective 9:** To determine whether recommendations from outside the project have been implemented. | | |
| * Has the project team received feedback from someone outside the project (other LWR staff, consultants, donors, etc.) since the last visit? |  |  |
| * If yes, did you discuss a work plan and roles and responsibilities for implementing relevant feedback with the partner? |  |  |
| * In the previous visit, if a work plan was created for implementing outsider feedback, has it been followed? |  |  |
| **Objective 10:** To understand the gender-related dimensions of implementation. | | |
| * Are there gender issues that were not identified at the beginning of the project that are creating barriers for men and women to fully participating in the current reporting period? |  |  |
| * Were there gaps between men and women participants evidenced by the sex-disaggregated data that are affecting the success of the project? |  |  |
| * Did the project take any action to ensure that the participation and the benefits of the project were more equitably shared among men, women, girls, and boys? |  |  |