

# Monitoring & Evaluation

Dr. Mihir Maitra

Consultant

New Delhi

[mihirmaitra77@gmail.com](mailto:mihirmaitra77@gmail.com)

# What is project monitoring

- Monitoring is continuous or periodical surveillance of the physical progress of a project.
- This includes assessment of the project activities in terms of inputs, activities, results and external factors.
- It studies project activities in the context of implementation schedule, the use and allocation of project inputs and the measurement of progress against the stated Outputs.
- Monitoring is an essential component of project management.

# Purpose of monitoring

- The purpose of monitoring is three fold. Firstly, monitoring assist the project team in successful implementation of the project through continuous review.
- This in turn makes it possible to bring about the mid-term corrections that may become necessary due to changed situations or other external factors.
- Secondly, it serves as a mechanism to inform the funding agency whether the progress is taking place as planned, particularly when the funds are released in installments.
- Thirdly, it provides for a basis and necessary data documentation for the project performance to be evaluated at a later stage.

# Types of Monitoring

## **Internal Monitoring and External Monitoring**

Internal monitoring:

- Conducted by the project implementing team itself.
- In fact it is an integral part of project implementation process.
- Internal monitoring could be conducted very formally or informally depending upon whether a monitoring plan is in place and is suitably budgeted or not.
- Such monitoring can take place at two levels namely at the village level and at the project office level.

# Village level

The quality of village level internal monitoring practices could be assessed by observing the following aspects of the village level monitoring meetings.

- Number and periodicity of monitoring meetings
- Attendance by members from underprivileged sections
- The nature of the project component being discussed
- Attitude and behavioral pattern of the participants
- Identification of the problems and their solutions
- Resolution for solving problems and related disputes amicably
- Capability of the participants to prepare and implement work plans etc.

# Project level monitoring

- Conducted in regular monitoring meetings held at the project office to assess the current progress against the implementation plan.
- The field officers from the project sites report progresses and problems of implementation to the manager and others.
- The project manager, in turn provides directions to the field staff before their departure to the respective project sites.
- The quality of monitoring meetings at the project office is best understood by evaluating the contents of the project monitoring plan.
- A study of the records of the monitoring meetings will give an idea about the effectiveness of the monitoring practices.
- Major issues associated with the project may be discussed and resolved in a special monitoring workshops, held as per need.

# External monitoring

- Essentially a requirement of the funding agency.
- Commonly performed by studying regular progress reports prepared in a given format. The funding agency may seek additional clarifications and suggest some corrective measures.
- Format for progress report should remain same throughout the project period so that trends and deviations could be analyzed regularly.
- A more intensive external monitoring is done by undertaking occasional field visits. A good monitoring procedure should not only take into account the physical progress alone but should also compare this with the inputs, activities, results and the external factors.
- The role of monitoring becomes all the more important in the case of development projects with multiple objectives generating both tangible and intangible benefits.
- For a closer monitoring, the funding agency must work in close collaboration with the implementing agency under a spirit of partnership.

# Problems in monitoring (Funding agency)

- Shortage of experienced manpower. Monitoring is a specialized task. It requires persons with adequate expertise which develops only through long experience.
- Inadequate inter-departmental cooperation and coordination on information exchange. A multi-disciplinary monitoring team often tend to become ineffective due team member's biases with their respective subjects of specialization.
- Lack of coordination relating to the financial monitoring, progress monitoring and process monitoring.
- Lack of institutional commitments. Sometimes, sufficient attentions are not attached to monitoring of the projects with the assumption that a good project implementing agency in any case will implement a project properly and *vice versa*. Hence, more attention are paid on pre-funding appraisal than post-funding monitoring.
- Poor standard of reporting. Some implementing agency fail to provide the necessary data and information in the desired format despite of repeated reminders. Poor reporting may be both intentional and unintentional in nature.
- Lack of clarity in describing the project objective and corresponding indicators to measure results.

# Project monitoring plan

- Step 1: Convert the basic project intents into a project planning matrix following Result Based Management approach.
- Step 2: Ensure that the Output and outcome statements have been defined in real, achievable and measurable terms. Fine tune the statements, if necessary. Usually 5-10 Output statement and 3-5 Outcome statements are good enough.
- Step 3: Identify the Indicators to be used to measure/monitor each of these Outputs and the Outcomes. Add quantitative and qualitative attributes to the Indicators.
- Step 4: Review if the proposed quantity and the quality attributed to the Indicators are achievable so as to arrive at the final target. The success/failure of the project in the future will be measured against these set targets.
- Step 5: Prepare a broad Work Plan for the entire project period covering all the major Activities.
- Step 6: Prepare a more specific Work Plan for the period for which Monitoring is proposed i.e quarterly/half yearly/annually.

# Steps in PMP

- Step 7: Ensure that all proposed Activities in the Work Plan contribute directly in achieving one Output or the other. Group the sub-Activities under a few major or the milestone Activities.
- Step 8: Establish a monitoring mechanism which is usually a review meeting, its frequency and a Format for recording the findings.
- Step 9: Evaluate using the Indicators, how much the completed Activities have actually contributed in accomplishing the Output targets. Record these findings in a standard Format.
- Step 10: Discuss in the monitoring meeting the achievements and the short falls ascertaining reasons for the same.
- Step 11: Incorporate corrective measures as considered appropriate. Scale up or scale down a particular Activity as per available resources and identified needs and priorities. Add new Activities or drop some of the on-going Activities, if necessary.

The steps 8,9 and 10 are repeated throughout the project period.

# Time line

Activity	Q - 1			Q - 2			Q - 3			Q - 4		
<b>Activity 1</b>	X	X	X	X								
<b>Activity 2</b>	X	X	X									
<b>Activity 3</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Activity 4</b>				X	X	X	X	X	X			
<b>Activity 5</b>				X	X	X	X	X	X			
<b>Activity 6</b>							X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Activity 7</b>										X	X	X

# Project Evaluation

- Evaluation refers to the assessment of performance, efficiency and impact of a project in the context of the stated objectives.
- Usually a need of the funding agency
- Could be conducted mid-term or at the end of project.
- Task of evaluation becomes easier when base line data have been collected before the beginning of the project.
- Otherwise, evaluations are done subjectively.
- Conducted on the basis of field visits, discussions with the beneficiaries and project team members.

# Focus

- Focus on major achievements
- Determine how effectively the strategies and operational procedures were used by the project team to achieve objectives
- Identify reasons why and when project implementation departed from the planned measures.
- Assess the nature of changes and their consequences. Nature of unplanned result
- Document and analyze departures for future reference

# Participatory evaluation

- A set of assessment areas are identified jointly by the PIA and the funding agency.
- This is followed by identifying a set of Indicators to measure the changes.
- Evaluation report is prepared separately by both the PIA and the representative (s) of the funding agency on common performance area using the same Indicators.
- The findings are shared in a joint meeting and lessons captured.