



GEF IWCAM BULLETIN FROM THE PROJECT COORDINATION UNIT

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Monitoring and Evaluation

We often hear about monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (how important it is for projects, that M&E systems need to be established, etc.), but do we really understand what M&E is and why we use it? This issue of the Bulletin attempts to answer key questions related to M&E and to help GEF-IWCAM demonstration projects and key stakeholders develop effective M&E systems.

This is largely a synthesis of The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (Evaluation Document 2006, No. 1), which can be found in its entirety on the GEF Evaluation Office web-site at <http://www.gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEAbout/meabout.html>

What is M&E?

Monitoring is a continuous or periodic function that uses systematic collection of data, qualitative and quantitative, for purposes of keeping activities on track.

Evaluation is a systemic and impartial assessment. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of involved partners. Evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations, and lessons into the decision-making process.

Monitoring and evaluations come together as a project management tool to ensure that projects stay on track and when they veer off, helps them resume their course. It also serves as an effective tool for decision-makers in terms of sharing lessons-learned and best practices.

Why does the Global Environment Facility take M&E so seriously?

M&E promotes accountability through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes, and performance. This, in turn, helps the GEF to determine the overall benefit its efforts have contributed to the global environment.

M&E also promotes learning, feedback, and knowledge-sharing on results and lessons learned, as a basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, program management, and projects, and to improve knowledge and performance.

Why is M&E important to the GEF-IWCAM Project?

A strong M&E program will help to build confidence among partners – both stakeholders and beneficiaries – particularly in terms of the reliability of information on development effectiveness. This is especially relevant because many of the approaches used in the GEF-IWCAM project are pioneering. Determining their efficacy will help stakeholders make important decisions regarding replication of these activities in the future.

Ongoing monitoring, throughout the life of the project, essentially asks the question – “Are we on track?” It provides early information on progress (or lack thereof) toward achieving the intended objectives, outcomes, and impacts. By tracking progress, monitoring helps identify implementation issues that warrant decisions at different levels of management.

How does the GEF-IWCAM project approach M&E?

The approach to monitoring which we use must be **SMART**:

Specific. The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to the achievement of an objective and only that objective.

Measurable. The monitoring system and indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what they cover and there are practical ways to measure them.

Achievable and Attributable. The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the results are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.

Relevant and Realistic. The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.

Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted. The

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system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at the desired frequency for a set period with clear identification of the particular stakeholder group(s) to be affected by the project or program.

Project evaluations provide important lessons learned and recommendations for future projects, policies, or portfolios. The guiding principles for the evaluation are:

Independence: The process must be independent from the policy-making process and the management of assistance. Evaluators should not have been engaged in activities to be evaluated (design, implementation, or supervision).

Impartiality: Evaluators must give a comprehensive and balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses.

Transparency: Clear communication concerning the purpose of the evaluation or monitoring activities, the criteria applied and the intended use of the findings is essential. Documentation emanating from monitoring and evaluation should be easily consultable and readable.

Disclosure: The lessons from M&E shall be disseminated by establishing effective feedback loops to policy-makers, operational staff, beneficiaries, and the general public.

Ethical: M&E shall provide due regard for the welfare, beliefs, and customs of those involved or affected, avoiding conflict of interest. Vested interests must not interfere with the evaluation.

Partnership: Joint evaluations should take place where there are activities being co-executed with partners. M&E activities shall be carried out with the participation of in-country stakeholders to enable beneficiaries to participate in the learning process with the GEF and to enable the GEF partnership to learn from them.

Competencies and Capacities: Depending on the subject, M&E activities require a range of expertise that may be technical, environmental, or within a social science or the evaluation profession.

Credibility: M&E shall be credible and based on reliable data or observations.

Utility: M&E must serve the information needs of intended users. Partners, evaluators, and units commissioning evaluations shall endeavour to ensure that the work is well informed, relevant, and timely, and is clearly and concisely presented so as to be of maximum benefit to stakeholders.



Learning to monitor effects of land use

How can I find out more about M&E?

There is a lot of information available on the web regarding M&E. The



Training, water quality testing

GEF-IWCAM project has also posted links to some helpful documents on the project web site at : www.iwcam.org. (Listed below also).

What else should I consider in order to set up M&E for my demonstration project or to help my country establish an M&E system?

Indicators! Look out for the September 2007 GEF-IWCAM Bulletin which will feature indicators.

Sasha Beth Gottlieb, Technical Coordinator at the GEF-IWCAM Project Coordinating Unit, may be contacted for additional information or if assistance is needed.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Links:

The GEF Evaluation Office - <http://www.gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEAbout/meabout.html>

The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy – http://www.gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEAbout/documents/Policies_and_Guidelines-me_policy-english.pdf (English)

http://www.gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEAbout/documents/Policies_and_Guidelines-me_policy-spanish.pdf (Spanish)

http://www.gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEAbout/documents/Policies_and_Guidelines-me_policy-french.pdf (French)

The United Nations Development Programme – GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Site - http://www.undp.org/gef/undp-gef_monitoring_evaluation/undp-gef_monitoring_evaluation.html

The United Nations Environment Programme Evaluation and Oversight Site - <http://www.unep.org/eou/>

The United Nations Population Fund: The Programme Manager's Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit – <http://www.unfpa.org/monitoring/toolkit.htm>

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