

Hand in Hand Sweden's Monitoring & Evaluation Policy

This policy was adopted by the Executive Board March 7, 2017.

Introduction

Hand in Hand Sweden (HiH Sweden) recognises the importance of having a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policy in place to promote accountability and learning from all our projects and programmes. This Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy has been developed in order to guide HiH Sweden in this respect and to clarify HiH Sweden's and Partner Organisations' (POs) respective role and responsibilities in relation to M&E. This policy sets out the principles of M&E as applicable only to HiH Sweden's supported projects and programmes.

All projects and programmes funded through HiH Sweden should have an appropriate M&E plan from the onset, which includes a well-developed Logical Framework (or log frame) that provides an overview of the envisaged results of the project /programme and describes its overarching logic. Having an M&E plan in place enables HiH Sweden and the POs to assess what works and what does not work in the implementation and to adapt the programmes/projects to the findings.

Three universal M&E questions that should permeate all our M&E work:

- are we doing what we said we would do?
- are we making any difference?
- are these the right things to do?

Why is Monitoring & Evaluation important

A well-functioning M&E system is a crucial part of good project/programme management and accountability. Timely and reliable M&E provides information to:

- Contribute to organisational learning and knowledge sharing by reflecting upon and sharing experiences and lessons so that we can gain the full benefit from what we do and how we do it.
- Provide evidence on achievements against envisaged project/programme goals.
- Uphold accountability and compliance by demonstrating whether or not our work has been carried out as agreed and in compliance with established standards.
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback, especially rights-holders (beneficiaries), which demonstrates a willingness to learn from experiences and to adapt to changing needs.
- Promote our work by highlighting our accomplishments and achievements, building morale and contributing to resource mobilization.

What is Monitoring & Evaluation?

Monitoring is an ongoing collection and review of information on a project's/ programme's activities, outputs and outcomes that provides indications of progress against the project's/programme's objectives. It is a collaborative process between the implementing organisation and the targeted communities to review what has happened, progress in delivering results and identify intended and unintended changes.

Evaluation is the comparison of the actual project/programme results against set plans. It looks at what was set to be done, what has been accomplished and how it was accomplished. Evaluations complement ongoing monitoring activities by providing more in-depth assessments of a project's/programme's design, its implementation and results. HiH Sweden uses internationally recognised evaluation criteria established by

the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These criteria are defined as follows:

- *Relevance*: measure the extent to which the project/programme activities are suited to the priorities and needs of the target groups.
- *Effectiveness*: measures the extent to which the objective has been achieved or the likelihood that it will be achieved.
- *Efficiency*: measures the outputs in relation to the inputs, looking at costs, implementing time, and economic and financial results.
- *Impact*: measures both the positive and negative changes produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- *Sustainability*: measuring whether the benefits of activities are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

Evaluations may be undertaken at any point in time where there is a need to learn more about how the project or programme is working. At a minimum, a project/programme should be evaluated once during the project/programme cycle, and preferably at the end (a final evaluation). To note, for all projects/programmes above USD 1 Million funded through HiH Sweden, an independent final evaluation needs to be done by an external evaluator for accountability and credibility of project/programme results.

HiH Sweden strongly encourages that all projects and programmes funded through HiH Sweden should have a baseline conducted prior to the implementation phase. This is necessary in order to measure progress over time. The baseline information is used for comparison at the end of a project/programme (endline study) to help determine the changes and results of the project/programme.

HiH Sweden's role and responsibility in M&E

HiH Sweden oversees the monitoring activities, and regularly reviews the monitoring data received from the POs. Together with the POs, HiH Sweden identifies indicators to be used to assess progress during and at the end of the project/programme. HiH Sweden should have access to the monitoring data related to its funded projects and programmes.

HiH Sweden, the PO and when relevant the Donor, decide together what, how and when evaluations will take place for projects/programmes funded through HiH Sweden. An M&E budget should be specified at the project development phase, which should include ongoing project/programme monitoring, baseline and endline (and possibly a midline). If deemed necessary, ad-hoc evaluations can be required, including thematic or strategic evaluations, on specific subjects.

For each evaluation, an Evaluation Management Group (EMG) should be appointed with representatives from HiH Sweden and the Partner Organisation. The EMG should hold the responsibility for overseeing the evaluation process, which includes deciding on the evaluation budget, developing Terms of References (TOR), selecting evaluation consultant(s) (if it is an external evaluation), checking that quality standards are met and ensuring that the evaluation report, the conclusions and recommendations are communicated effectively.

The Partner Organisations' role and responsibility in M&E

As a general rule, those who implement a project are also responsible for monitoring it. This means that HiH Sweden relies on its POs for the ongoing collection and review of project and programme activities. It is important that POs carry out monitoring at a regular basis. They have to ensure that M&E processes are conducted in an open and transparent way, and that all relevant stakeholders are informed and involved whenever deemed necessary.

The POs are responsible for regularly communicating and updating HiH Sweden on projects'/programmes' progress and on any deviations that might occur. They are also responsible for proposing adjustments if the

project/programme is not performing as expected. It is important that the POs ensures confidentiality of sensitive information that could harm the rights-holders.

The POs is part of the EMG but is also actively involved in the preparation of the evaluation, such as a briefing the evaluator(s), give access to monitoring data and providing relevant documents. If the POs conduct an evaluation themselves, they are responsible for coordinating, data collection, analysis, and report writing. The POs should always decide together with HiH Sweden on the evaluation method and tools.

Dissemination of findings

An essential part of M&E is the dissemination of analyses, recommendations and lessons learned. HiH Sweden and the POs therefore need to encourage a culture of learning within their respective organisations. By doing this, they ensure transparency of information from M&E activities and accessibility to evaluation reports. The recommendations, lessons learned and best practices should form the basis for new projects and programmes and support relevance and efficiency of the interventions.

Monitoring & Evaluation ethics

M&E may involve collecting, analysing and communicating information about people. Therefore it is especially important that M&E is conducted in an ethical and confidential manner, with particular regard to the wellbeing of those involved in and/ or affected by it (especially the rights-holders). HiH Sweden therefore adheres to the following key standards and practices for ethical and accountable M&E:

- M&E practices should uphold the principle of 'do no harm'. Data collectors and those disseminating M&E reports should be respectful that certain information can endanger or embarrass respondents.
- M&E should respect the customs, culture and dignity of all stakeholders. This includes being sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environments in which M&E is carried out. It also includes being sensitive to discrimination and gender inequality.
- Participants in data collection have the obligation and ethical responsibility to report any evidence of criminal activity or wrongdoing that may harm others (e.g. alleged sexual abuse, systematic discrimination and more).
- When feasible and appropriate, M&E should be participatory. The evaluator should try to find ways to involve stakeholders, e.g. rights-holders.