

1. Take charge. Monitoring and evaluation are as important as any other components of management. In your own interests, you need continuous evaluation. Start at once to develop a system. Keep it simple. Don't let it get out of hand.

2. The first step in designing an evaluation system is to select evaluation criteria. In part this anticipates what others are going to want and in part it is built on what you need.

Start with the project design document and note what it has on the subject. The Logical Framework can be made into an excellent evaluation tool. Finally, review the contract. These will give you a good idea of what the donor intends. From these synthesize a list of criteria. Match them against your own ideas, based on observation and experience, and against the interests and ideas of the host institution. As you gain experience, review the match among these interests.

From this draw up a list of evaluation criteria that will serve your purposes specifically and will be consistent with donor expectations. The more you can work with the host institution the more fruitful will be your efforts. Be sure your list is consistent with your objectives.

3. The second step is to develop measures that will reflect the criteria. You need measures that can be used well before any impacts of the project are likely. Early in the project these will be related more to input management than to output. As time goes on, more attention can be given to outputs. With inputs, however, there is a type of interim output. Selection and processing of participants is an interim or intermediate output of an input of expatriate technical assistance and resources. Results of the first year's research is an intermediate output, be it the characterization of a type of farming area, results of research, or the start of area-specific research in a new area.

These intermediate or interim measures are tricky. They can easily fall into measures of input, and little more. There will be some value in measures of input, but you can go farther without violating the criteria of simplicity.

One means of going farther is to conceptualize the task or tasks you face, to translate the conceptualization into activities, and to put them on an activity chart. Progress through the activity chart will produce significant interim outputs. If they don't seem significant, then the activity chart needs to be revised. This indicates the relationship among planning, objective setting, and evaluation.

4. You will need a means of gathering information on the measures you have developed. Information should be that which the team itself can provide, and by activities that are closely related to the regular team duties. For example, if you can use information that a team member needs to record as part of his work, you gain efficiency and increase the chance that your system will indeed be implemented.