



CHAPTER 6

DETERMINING CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESULTS:
MONITORING AND EVALUATION (BUILDING BLOCK 4)

Determining Contributions to Results: Monitoring and Evaluation (Building Block 4)

Monitoring and evaluation function when the systems supply managers with reliable information and analyses about what works and what doesn't as a basis for effective public action and continuous performance improvement. Monitoring and evaluation derive their value not only from collecting data and producing reports but also from the way facts and analyses are used to inform decision-making operations, accountability, and learning.

Approaching results orientation by promoting monitoring and evaluation theories, methods, and data processing systems in isolation is unlikely to lead to much improvement in performance. In fact, when disconnected from the incentive structures and planning that underlie national decision making, establishing new systems, even if they are geared toward results, can actually undermine results-based management. If results data are not actually used to guide actions, the effort is tantamount to adding an unnecessary reporting burden which invariably leads to deterioration in data quality and which can divert public managers from productive service delivery. Monitoring and evaluation geared toward results will ultimately have an effect only where there is a genuine demand for the insights they produce; where managers desire an empirical foundation for decision making; where rewards and sanctions are guided by the achievement of results; and where managers collectively perceive a self-interest in adopting guides for continuous learning.

A. Outcome Information

Once outcome objectives and targets have been established and then used for resource and work

planning, results management depends on timely and reliable information. Reflecting trends in socioeconomic conditions, information about development outcomes generally depends on compiling population or sample statistics. The existence of a well-functioning national statistical system is therefore an important part of a country's infrastructure for results-based management.

When analyzing performance on the basis of trends in monitoring data alone, there is a risk of oversimplification that misses factors that contributed to improvements or deterioration. While monitoring gives information on where an agency, program, or project is in relation to its objectives and performance targets at a particular point in time, evaluation is intended to help understand why targets have or have not been achieved. Evaluation helps to re-think the causes of a problem and to identify emerging problems and how to respond to them.

There is no objective, scientific method for assessing contributions to outcomes. The best practices often involve combining primary and secondary data collection methods and qualitative and quantitative techniques.

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Beyond the formalized, structured techniques for reviewing effectiveness whether in evaluations, studies, or reviews, a key dimension of understanding contributions to outcomes is self-reporting by the managers and agencies involved. Although they are not independent in how they report on their own performances, adopting outcomes as the focus of reporting is key to emphasizing the results that ultimately matter the most.

Questions to Pose

- Are household or other comprehensive socioeconomic surveys regularly conducted (i.e. at least every 5 years)?
- Does information exist that provides facts about the local dimensions of poverty and human development?
- Has an MDG progress report recently been produced?
- What are the legal mandate, the funding base, and the pool of skills for the national statistical office?
- Does one or more (government or nongovernment) poverty monitoring and analysis unit exist that can meaningfully digest national socioeconomic statistical findings?
- How are evaluation and research priorities determined?
- Are government policies, programs and projects subjected to regular and independent evaluation or other reviews of effectiveness?
- Are evaluation findings widely disseminated?

B. Output Information

Continuous information about outputs and progress toward outcomes is an important component of results-based management. Information about outputs is generally most conveniently available from administrative data sources, i.e. the management information systems (MIS) that are maintained by ministries and service

delivery agencies. Relevant information includes the physical outputs of a ministry, department, or service delivery agency but also standards of service and client satisfaction with different aspects of services. Information on outputs may also be compiled and managed by agents outside of government, e.g., consumer groups and community-based organizations that monitor service delivery through client scorecards, attitude/perception surveys, public hearings, and other mechanisms that can exert pressure on public service agencies.

In understanding performance related to outputs, the underlying question to be addressed relates to the efficiency of service delivery. Efficiency has both quantitative and qualitative characteristics that include the volume and cost of service; opening hours; response times and error rates; the accessibility of services and the courtesy with which they are provided; and citizen/customer satisfaction.

Questions to Pose

- Do ministerial MIS capture data on client satisfaction and impact of service delivery?
- Are there service-delivery surveys that show trends in client satisfaction?
- Do ministries and agencies produce quarterly or annual reports that summarize achievements in terms of service delivery scope, access, quality, and client satisfaction?
- Are overlaps in data collection by ministries and agencies providing services avoided by interconnecting MIS?

C. Financial Controls

Any results management system depends on accounting systems, procedures, and practices that are designed to mitigate the chances of fraud and increase the likelihood that if fraud does occur, it will be discovered. Financial controls generally have many different components from ethical codes and legal bases for prosecution of misconduct through audit institutions and information systems that track expenditures. However, attitudes and behaviors are not solely a product of policy and legislation: the culture or ethos of civil service is also an important determinant of how well financial controls function in practice.

Questions to Pose

- Are national audit agencies able to verify the accounts of all ministries, local governments, and public agencies?
- Do clear and transparent rules and regulations govern public procurement?
- Are international standards of audit adhered to?
- Does the supreme national audit institution have free access to expenditure records?
- Are public accounts prepared (and published) on a timely basis?
- Does the legislative branch have an accounts committee or other mandate to provide oversight of government expenditures, e.g., through review of the audited financial statements of public agencies?

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