

Phase D: Reporting Findings

- C Write the evaluation report.
- C Decide on the method of sharing the evaluation results.
- C Decide on communication strategies.
- C Share the draft report with stakeholders and revise as needed.
- C Disseminate evaluation report.
- C Meet with project stakeholders to discuss and follow-up on findings once they have accepted the findings.

Phase E: Implementing Evaluation Recommendations

- C Develop a new/revised implementation plan in partnership with stakeholders.
- C Monitor the implementation of evaluation recommendations and report regularly on the implementation progress.
- C Plan the next evaluation.

UNIT 2 CONCEPTUALIZING A MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

PURPOSE OF THE UNIT

This unit helps participants to think about some tasks that are involved in conceptualizing a monitoring and evaluation system. It also assists participants in thinking about the criteria for selecting an evaluation team and the need for internal and external evaluation. The unit distinguishes between programme goals and objectives and monitoring and evaluation objectives. The unit also explains what a conceptual framework is and how to develop one.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, participants should be able to:

- C explain the criteria to use for selecting an evaluation team;
- C determine the need for internal and external monitoring and evaluation;
- C develop/revise a programme conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluation;
- C distinguish between programme goals and objectives and monitoring and evaluation objectives.

UNIT OVERVIEW

- Session 1: Criteria for Selecting the Core Monitoring and Evaluation Team (60 minutes)
- Session 2: Internal and External Monitoring and Evaluation (30 minutes)
- Session 3: Developing a Programme Conceptual Framework (120 minutes)
- Session 4: Programme Goals and Objectives vis a vis Monitoring and Evaluation Objectives (60 minutes)

TIME

4 hours 30 minutes

**ADVANCE
PREPARATION**

Photocopy all handouts and prepare transparencies.

- Handouts:**
- 2.1 Topics for Training Monitoring and Evaluation Teams
 - 2.2 Sample of a Conceptual Framework
 - 2.3 Sample of a Logical Framework
 - 2.4 Blank Logical Framework
 - 2.5a-d Programme Descriptions for a Conceptual/Logical Framework Exercise
- Transparencies:**
- 2.1 Skills and Experiences Needed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Team
 - 2.2 Goals
 - 2.3 Objectives
 - 2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Objectives
 - 2.5 Sample Conceptual Framework: Diagram of a Nutrition Programme
 - 2.6 Sample Logical Framework of a Nutrition Programme
 - 2.7 The Elements of a Conceptual Framework
- Materials:** flipchart, four sets of cards of the various elements of hypothetical nutrition programmes, blank cards, pens, markers, masking tape, overhead transparencies, overhead projector, transparency pens

PROCEDURE

Session 1 **Criteria for Selecting the Core Monitoring and Evaluation Team** 60 minutes

Step 1: Present the unit objectives and overview.

Step 2: Hang the following two cards on the wall:

Members of the Monitoring and Evaluation Team
Skills and Experience Needed

In 4 groups, ask participants to identify who should be a member of the monitoring and evaluation team and what skills the members need. Ask them to write their responses on the cards and to hang them on the wall. Discuss their responses.

Point out that the a monitoring and evaluation team refers to a small group of people who will be responsible for planning, supervising, and analysing monitoring and evaluation information. The team should include:

- C **a monitoring and evaluation director** who is responsible for coordinating the planning and implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities. This includes supervising the project staff and team.
- C **a nutritionist** who will provide technical support and help develop sound recommendations.
- C **other resource people** including programme staff members and such people as social scientists, a statistician and those with good writing skills.

The **field team** usually consists of programme staff and other stakeholders including supervisors and interviewers. Ideally, all members of the monitoring and evaluation team should be recruited early to enable them to participate in all aspects of monitoring and evaluation activities. How the team is selected depends on local resources and the level of participation desired by programme personnel.

Step 3: Show **Transparency 2.1** which summarizes the recommended skills and experience of the monitoring and evaluation team. Compare this information with the responses given by participants. Point out the importance of having a team in place with backups before embarking on the monitoring and evaluation activities.

Step 4: Explain to participants that the number of field personnel required to conduct monitoring and evaluation depends on the methods to be used, including the number of interviews or focus groups to be conducted and the amount of time available for the completion of the field work. Point out that if time is short, several teams may need to work simultaneously which will increase the number of field workers and supervisors required. Also note that the distance between sites may affect transportation, costs and time required. Also point out that different monitoring and evaluation methods need different staff numbers and qualifications and different amounts of time to complete. All of these decisions have salary, accommodation, and transport implications.

Step 5: Using **Handout 2.1** explain the importance of training the team on the general issues related to the monitoring and evaluation activities. Ask participants how they plan to train field workers and monitor their work in the field. Point out that the training sessions should be as participatory as possible, using training techniques such as discussions, small group exercises, and role-plays. The training may take four to five days to complete.

Step 6: Explain the importance of field supervision during monitoring and evaluation activities. Point out that supervision involves giving guidance and advice as well as problem solving. Supervisors may be responsible for logistics coordination as well as the technical quality of the monitoring and evaluation activities in the field.

Explain that field supervision is critical to the effective performance of the team for the following reasons:

- C it is important to ensure that staff have what they need to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities in a timely and efficient manner;
- C daily supervision is necessary to catch errors or incompleteness of data, so that field workers can revisit households or individuals to correct any problems;
- C if teams are working in widely separated sites, additional supervisors are needed.

Step 7: Ask participants why they think the monitoring and evaluation director should make frequent unannounced visits to observe field activities. The following points should come out:

- C to examine a sample of data forms;

- C to accompany interviewers to understand their work and offer suggestions for improvement;
- C to validate each interviewer's work early in the monitoring and evaluation process;
- C to train supervisors to be supportive rather than critical in dealing with problems and inconsistencies;
- C to have staff feel free to ask questions and raise issues rather than to have them cover up mistakes out of fear of disapproval or criticism.

Session 2 Internal and External Monitoring and Evaluation 30 minutes

Step 1: Remind participants that planning for monitoring and evaluation is done during the early stages of programme planning. Point out that there are three basic options for structuring monitoring and evaluation activities. These are:

- contracting external evaluators
- both internal and external personnel
- programme personnel only

Step 2: Divide participants into two groups: Pro and Contra. Have participants debate the value of internal and external monitoring and evaluation. Ask some participants to serve on the judges' panel. Allow about 15 minutes for the debate.

Step 3: After the debate the following points should come out:

- In large, expensive nutrition projects, it may be well worth contracting with an external institution or consultant who would be actively involved in evaluation-related activities throughout the life of the programme or project.
- In medium-sized projects, it may not be necessary to have an external institution or evaluator involved in programme evaluation. Instead the external consultant, working at all times with internal staff, could take responsibility for designing the evaluation, assist in the identification of control groups, and participate in the data collection and analysis. The external consultant would also be involved in quality checks on monitoring data and would assist supervisors with data disaggregation.
- In smaller projects, an external evaluator, often a single individual with monitoring and evaluation expertise, would be present at the beginning of the project to advise on the monitoring and evaluation system as a whole, and specifically on issues of control group (or a reasonable substitute), sample size and critical indicators, and, in some cases, provide necessary orientation for staff who will be responsible for data collection and analysis.
- The external evaluator would then rejoin internal personnel at the conclusion of the project to review the monitoring and evaluation data collected and the analysis carried out, and would meet with project managers, service providers and groups of beneficiaries to discuss the process and interpretations of the conclusions.

Point out that external evaluations are more likely to be objective, and viewed by outsiders as objective, than internal evaluations. However, it is important to recognize that external evaluators, if not properly briefed, may sometimes be out of touch with programme realities and fail to appreciate the importance (or nuance) of programme activities and their impacts.

Internal monitoring and evaluation, on the other hand, may be more likely to capture the full context of a programme and be more relevant to programme needs. The disadvantages are that internal M&E activities may be viewed by outsiders (decision makers) as subjective and biased, and some programmes may not have staff with the skills to design, implement and evaluate M&E systems. In these cases, external consultants are recommended.

Step 4: Summarize this session by reminding participants that whenever an external evaluator or institution is involved in programme monitoring and evaluation, they need clear terms of reference and all necessary project documentation.

Ask participants to think about how they would plan for internal and external monitoring and evaluation of their own programmes.

Session 3 Developing a Programme Conceptual Framework 120 minutes

Step 1: Remind participants that at the planning stage of a programme, it is necessary to include plans for monitoring and evaluation. This can be done by developing a conceptual framework of the programme, a tool which is simple and readily applicable in the monitoring and evaluation of any integrated development programme.

Explain that developing a conceptual framework for a programme allows staff to articulate how they anticipate programme inputs and activities will achieve the desired effects, reach consensus on the details of the programme, and clarify the terminology that will be used.

Remind participants that the process in the conceptual framework starts by understanding the problem/need the programme is addressing. What is the problem, how big, who does it affect, what are the cause(s) of the problem? If the programme defines the **problem** wrongly, everything thereafter is all wrong.

Step 2: Using **Transparency 2.5 (Handout 2.2;** provide handout after discussing transparency), explain to participants that the framework indicates what *elements* need to be monitored and/or evaluated. These elements can later be translated into *indicators*. Inform the participants that they will learn more about indicators in Unit 3. Also point out that the framework makes it easier to identify specific constraints to programme effectiveness as the programme evolves.

Dividing a programme into various components makes it easier to create the necessary indicators to assess the programme and identify the specific constraints to programme effectiveness as the programme is being implemented. The programme conceptual framework is a dynamic instrument.

Step 3: Further point out that in this particular framework there are four principal elements: **inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts** that can be translated into indicators and are particularly useful in monitoring and evaluating nutrition programmes. Point out that we make **assumptions** about the relationships between these elements when creating this diagram.

Step 4: Using **Transparency 2.6 (also Handout 2.3, but distribute the handout at the end of the exercise because they will complete the same logframe as part of group work)** explain that the elements of the conceptual framework can be rearranged into a logical framework to

organize the elements of the conceptual framework in tabular form.

Step 5: In small groups assign one of these five elements to each group. Ask participants to explain the meaning of the element they have been assigned. Allow 10 minutes for this activity.

At the end of the small group session, synthesize the group's reports and relate to **Transparency 2.7**. The following points should come out:

Inputs—all those resources that go into the programme at the onset or start-up phase or during the implementation to help the programme achieve its objectives.

The **inputs** (the number and qualifications of personnel, the financial resources, the institutional set-up, timing, etc.) must be designed as to meet the problem. The inputs should be distributed to meet all needy groups and be **accessible** financially, socially and technically. If this does not happen the inputs are useless and the outputs may not be met.

Outputs—all the goods and services delivered to the target population by the programme. Programme inputs have to be transformed into **outputs**. The quantity and quality of the outputs is very important.

For instance, if one programme input were the training of CHWs, the outputs are the number of trained CHWs. The quality of the training should also be “adequate,” otherwise just training them would not help in effectively meeting the needs of the community.

Also explain that having very well-trained staff or people does not necessarily generate programme delivery nor impact. Success and impact are created by making sure that the trained personnel are enabled to do the work that they were trained for.

Outcomes—changes in behaviours/practices as a result of programme activities.

The outputs, if of the right quantity and quality, should produce an **outcome**. The skills of the CHWs should change, and if they do their tasks well, the detrimental behaviour/practices of the mothers should change for the better of their children's health. The change in skills of the CHWs and/or the change in behaviour/practices of the mothers is the outcome of the programme. The outcome is

expected to influence the problem, as defined initially.

Impacts—the effect of the programme on the beneficiaries. The change in the problem is the **impact** of the program on the beneficiaries/clients.

Assumptions—the external factors, influences, situations or conditions which are necessary for project success. They are important for the success of the programme but are largely or completely beyond the control of programme management. For example, in nutrition education, we may assume that community workers who are trained will understand the training and be motivated to do what they have been trained to do. However, we cannot be sure that this actually will happen. Accordingly, it is necessary to make assumptions explicit and list them in the framework as elements to be monitored or evaluated.

Step 6: Using **Transparency 2.6 (Handout 2.3)** again, walk participants through the process of transferring the conceptual framework into a logical framework.

Step 7: Divide participants into four groups, and provide each group with a set of cards on which the various elements of a hypothetical nutrition programme are written (each group receives a different programme; **Figures 1-4** show the elements arranged in sample conceptual frameworks). Ask participants to arrange the cards to create a conceptual framework and copy their framework onto a flipchart. Allow about 15 minutes for this activity.

Once a group has completed a conceptual framework for their hypothetical program, ask them to complete **Handout 2.4** (a blank logical framework) for their hypothetical programme. Allow about 45 minutes for this. Share one or two examples in plenary.

Step 8: Ask participants to complete a conceptual framework and logical framework for their own programme during the evening. They should be prepared to share this in plenary the following day.

Session 4 Programme Goals and Objectives vis a vis Monitoring and Evaluation Objectives 60 minutes

Step 1: Put two cards on the board: Goals and Objectives. In groups of four, ask participants to brainstorm and indicate what comes to their mind when they see the terms goals and objectives. Process their statements/words and then show them **Transparencies 2.2 and 2.3.**

Point out that goals do not specify concrete expectations or the criteria which will be used to measure programme success. Further note that goals are not time-bound and may often refer to the vision of a programme.

Step 2: Now explain to participants that objectives are derived from goals and must be SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime- bound. Point out that programme as well as monitoring and evaluation objectives, are usually stated in the form of a declarative statement, stating the purpose of the programme or monitoring and evaluation and the precise ground to be covered.

Step 3: Tell participants that programme objectives should easily be seen in the “programme structure.” Remind them that the programme is evaluated against its objectives and monitoring is done against outputs which contribute to the attainment of results and achievement of objectives.

Step 4: Explain that the elements of the structure should be understood and agreed upon by stakeholders. Ask participants why they think it is necessary to involve stakeholders in the task of developing the monitoring and evaluation objectives. The following points should come out:

- to ensure that monitoring and evaluation respond to the concerns of program managers and field staff, beneficiaries/clients and donors/government;
- to promote program stakeholders’ sense of ownership of the monitoring and evaluation process and results;
- to provide the monitoring and evaluation coordinator with a clear understanding of the staff priorities for the monitoring and evaluation.

Step 5: Mention the fact that monitoring and evaluation objectives are often derived from programme goals and objectives. They are also often linked to the intended use of the information collected in the process. Show

Transparency 2.4.

Step 6: In the same 4 groups, assign the following task as an exercise. Distribute **Handouts 2.5a-d** and have each group write a goal and objectives for the programmes described:

- Group 1: A growth monitoring programme with a food security component
- Group 2: A child health programme providing micronutrient supplementation
- Group 3: A school-based programme to improve micronutrient nutrition among adolescent girls
- Group 4: A workplace-based programme to improve micronutrient nutrition among adolescent girls

Allow 10 minutes for this activity and share the responses in the groups.

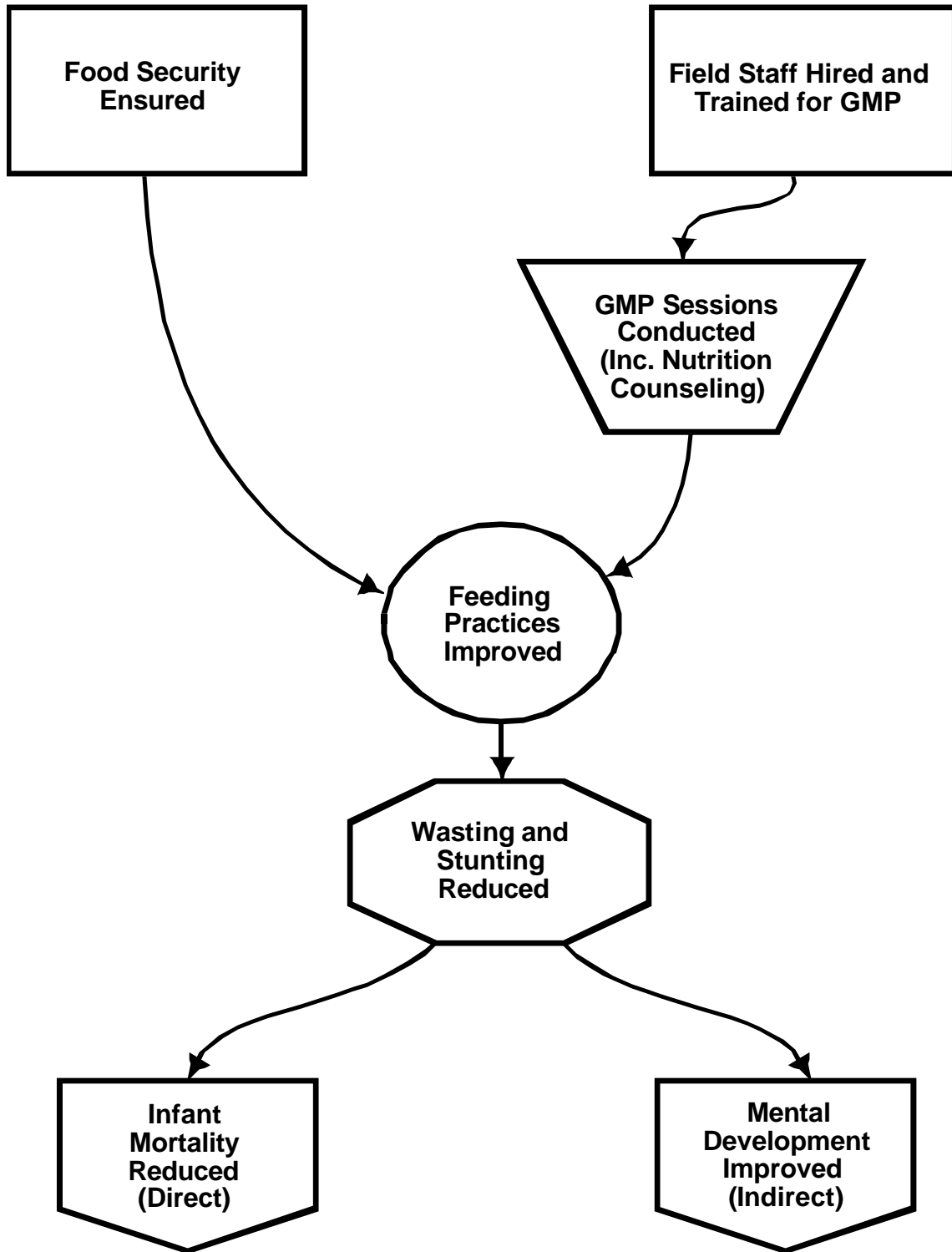
Now ask the same groups to write monitoring and evaluation objectives for the programme. Allow 15 minutes for this activity. When the groups have finished, share their monitoring and evaluation objectives in plenary and determine if the monitoring and evaluation objectives have been derived from and are related to programme goals and objectives.

Remind participants that monitoring and evaluation objectives should shed light on monitoring and evaluation questions. These questions in turn define the information which the monitoring and evaluation activities seek to collect and guide the development of data collection instruments. These questions should not be misunderstood to be those used in the actual interviews for a programme evaluation by collaborators. They are only a guide to development of the “real tool.”

For example, an evaluation question for a programme involved in the training of community nutrition workers would be: *for each of the training sessions conducted, was a training plan developed and a report of the activity written?*

Step 7: Ask participants to review their own programme goals and objectives and to revise them if necessary. They should be prepared to present these in plenary in the following day’s session.

GROUP 1: A Growth Monitoring and Promotion Programme with a Food Security Component



**GROUP 2: A Child Health Program
Providing Micronutrient Supplementation**

