

Chapter 3

Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy

1. Introduction

Monitoring is the process by which a humanitarian operation is continuously reviewed to determine whether the implemented activities have the desired impact and are being undertaken within the agreed timeframes and costs. Monitoring is usually conducted during an operation.

An **evaluation** is usually conducted upon completion of an operation or of a specific phase of an operation. It examines all aspects, including the design, dynamics, implementation and results of a specific project or an overall programme. The findings of an evaluation will usually help to determine how to adjust or improve the object of the evaluation.

Monitoring and evaluation are both **management tools** that ensure that a protection operation is running efficiently and that stakeholders are accountable for the activities they carry out. Equally importantly, they assist in correcting aspects of the programme so that it can better meet its objectives. Monitoring is a **continuous process** that provides early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the implementation so that an operation can be corrected immediately. Evaluation, on the other hand, occurs less frequently but might be more comprehensive.

A variety of **indicators** are used to monitor and evaluate a protection strategy. A summary of some of these indicators is provided in Annex 2. These indicators should also help to determine whether a plan of action/protection strategy is working.

2. Monitoring

Monitoring provides the first opportunity to measure the results of a protection strategy. It is a particularly important step in operations that require frequent revisions of a plan of action to respond to a rapidly changing environment, as in an emergency.

2.1 Who monitors?

Traditionally, the agency that funds or implements an activity is responsible, from the perspective of financial accountability, to monitor the activity itself. While this is important, it often results in fragmented data collection.

Monitoring should thus be undertaken collectively by IDPs and other affected communities, the authorities involved and humanitarian agencies. The allocation of responsibility for monitoring, what should be monitored and how it should be done should be clearly defined and included in the final protection strategy document.

2.2 How do we monitor?

Monitoring **activities** can take different forms, including:

- Scheduled or random visits to local communities;
- Discussions with focus groups that took part in participatory assessment exercises;
- Regular discussions with local authorities;


¹ This Chapter refers to “monitoring” as a generic programming tool and not as the activity known as “protection monitoring”, which is dealt with under Part IV of the Handbook, Guidance Note 1, *Protection monitoring*.

² Exceptions to this are real-time evaluations conducted while operations are still ongoing.

- Periodic analysis of baseline data gathered in the above visits and discussions, and from monitoring reports by humanitarian agencies; and
- Analysis of financial reports and levels of implementation against planned activities.

Monitoring should not be conducted or perceived as an inquisitorial process, but rather as **an ongoing communication among various stakeholders to measure and improve the impact of operations.**

How a protection strategy is monitored depends on what needs to be monitored. Monitoring can be divided into two categories:

- **Situation monitoring:** Measures change in a condition or a set of conditions in a given operation. Baseline data provide the initial information against which changes can be measured. Baseline and subsequent data can be drawn from participatory assessments, discussions with stakeholders and even a desk review. The data will be most useful if they are disaggregated by sex, age and socio economic factors, such as whether the persons live in urban or rural settlements and their professions (see Part IV.1) 
- **Performance monitoring:** Measures progress in achieving specific results in relation to an implementation plan. It includes:
 - *Input monitoring*, which determines whether human, financial and material resources are mobilized and deployed as planned;
 - *Output monitoring*, which establishes whether products or services are being delivered or planned; and
 - *Process monitoring*, which reviews the processes by which an operation is managed.
- **Impact monitoring:** Reviews whether a programme is having the expected impact and, if not, what changes should be made to improve it. It also verifies whether any aspect of the strategy has produced any adverse effects on members of the community or any other actor.

3. Evaluation

3.1 Who undertakes evaluations?

Depending on what is being reviewed, an evaluation can be led or undertaken by a single agency (which is not advisable), by a specific cluster or working group, or jointly among various clusters/sectors. It can be undertaken by the individuals working in an operation or by persons who are not directly associated with the operation, as in external or independent evaluations.

3.2 How do we evaluate?

Given that a range of stakeholders are usually involved in responding to a humanitarian crisis, it is crucial that all parties agree to the criteria used to evaluate the operation. Such criteria are determined by the evaluation's objective and scope. They include:

- **Inclusiveness and representation:** The extent to which the concerns and views of women, men, boys and girls of all ages among IDPs and other affected communities are included in the design of the programmes and activities.
- **Relevance:** The extent to which the protection strategy for IDPs and other affected communities is consistent with the priorities and policies of the communities themselves.
- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the protection strategy document achieves its objectives.
- **Efficiency:** It is useful to consider whether the planned actions were implemented in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
- **Impact:** Direct or indirect positive and negative long-term effects on IDPs and other affected communities as a result of an activity, intended or unintended.

- **Sustainability:** The extent to which the objectives of a programme activity will continue after the project is over, and the extent to which the government, IDPs and other affected communities benefiting from a project are willing to assume responsibility for achieving the programme's objectives.

Evaluations can be divided into the following categories:

- **Participatory or community-based evaluations:** These assist in understanding how IDPs and other affected communities perceive and assess the humanitarian operation. To be effective, such evaluations should be carried out over an extended period of time by a person or team with social research skills.
- **Real-time evaluations:** These are conducted in the acute phase of an emergency, some four to six weeks after the onset of a crisis. Real time evaluations often focus on overall operational performance issues and provide findings and recommendations that can be put to immediate use by operations managers and field staff.
- **Self-evaluations:** These are undertaken by the teams in a country operation to assess the impact of their work and to plan future activities. All stakeholders, including IDPs and others of concern, should be involved.
- **Lessons-learned evaluations:** These are undertaken upon the completion of a major humanitarian operation. Such workshops provide a record of accomplishments and problems encountered which can be used to plan and implement similar programmes in other countries or regions.
- **End-of-project evaluations:** These are undertaken at the end of a project or end of a fiscal year. They provide a comprehensive review of achievements and impact, and ensure better planning of programmes for the following year.

Annex 1:

Some Dos and Don'ts Concerning Assessment

(Based on a UNICEF paper, “Some guiding principles and principles of ethics”)

DO

- Ask the community, particularly women and youth groups, to identify potential areas or issues needing immediate attention.
- Explain the objectives and purpose of the assessment, what it can achieve and what it cannot, to the community, community leaders or professionals to ensure their cooperation.
- Be aware of the range of interviewees who can provide a representative sample of perspectives. Try to obtain responses from different sources whenever possible.
- When seeking the participation of a child, explain the nature and objectives of the assessment to the child's parents or adult guardian and secure verbal permission to speak with the child.
- Explain the project to the child in a way he/she can understand.
- Obtain consent from all adult participants in any activity, and inform them that they can refuse to take part in the assessment without negative consequences.
- When interviewing, remain aware of the risks individuals may face by talking to outsiders.
- Be certain that interviews about sensitive topics are conducted individually and confidentially.
- Be aware of the background of interpreters and others who accompany the assessment team.
- Ensure that women interviewers are available to interview other women.
- Protect the safety and security of respondents and assessment-team members.
- Remain ready to protect any individual if the team receives information of incidents likely to cause significant harm.
- Try to talk to groups that might be marginalized, particularly women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to minority groups, persons belonging to different religious groups, unless you believe that this would expose them or you to increased risk.
- Respect the dignity and self-worth of individuals, particularly women and children, at all times.

DO NOT

- Make promises if you are not sure you can keep them.
- Probe for information when it appears that a person would rather not give an answer.
- Ask intrusive questions; be aware of what is considered intrusive in the cultural context.
- Take pictures or videos of individuals without their informed consent.
- Record names and reveal identities of interviewees.
- Talk to other participants about a specific interview. To do so shows that confidentiality is not being respected.
- Ask questions, particularly those related to protection, in front of armed personnel, security personnel and officials.

Annex 2

Indicators

Some agencies make a distinction between impact indicators and performance indicators:

1. **Impact indicators** are signs of change in conditions or institutional practice that affect the population of concern and its welfare. They are set at the **objective** level. For instance:
 - *Seventy percent primary enrolment and 80% attendance ratio of both girls and boys.*
 - *Number of arbitrary arrests of refugees and asylum seekers reduced by at least 70%.*
 - *National legislation foresees oversight mechanisms towards non-discriminatory access to public services for all citizens, including internally displaced persons.*
 - *All internally displaced persons in the village have permanent housing.*
2. **Performance indicators** are defined as targets that measure performance towards the achievement of planned results. They are set at the **activity** level. These are activities that can be quantified and/or graded in terms of quality and timeliness. For instance:
 - *Ten-minute radio programmes promoting girls' attendance are broadcast weekly, April to September, reaching 70% of the population.*
 - *Legal clinics opened in three major cities and staffed to receive 200 internally displaced persons and other persons of concern each month.*
 - *First draft of reviewed IDP legislation debated in parliamentary committee by 30 June.*
 - *Regional credit schemes open up specific programmes for internally displaced persons.*

Whether impact or performance indicators, they should always be sensitive to age, gender and diversity.

Indicators can also be:

1. **Qualitative**, where they reflect opinions, judgements and attitudes about a given situation or issue; or
2. **Quantitative**, where they measure the amount of something, such as the percentage of IDP girls and boys who attend primary school as compared to a baseline level.