
MEL & KM System

(Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Knowledge Management)



1. Background:

- 1.1. Sarva Seva Samity Sanstha (4S India) is a not-for-profit organization registered under Society Registration Act 21, 1860 in 2003. Priority focus of the organization is to identify vulnerable communities, organizing communities, ensuring entitlements and convergence, providing conceptual, technical, financial and marketing support backed with research and advocacy.
- 1.2. The activities of the organization are highly diverse and range from the organization of short-term, small scale, stand-alone courses and other learning events to long-term, large-scale technical capacity development projects, many of which are implemented with partners /CBOs and involve activities linked to multiple outputs and outcomes. The means of delivery are equally diverse and include face-to-face, technology-enhanced and blended forms of training, networking and knowledge sharing and analysis.
- 1.3. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are the backbone of any development intervention—it ensures high-quality implementation, provides timely information for informed management decisions, and measures contributions to outcomes and impacts. As part of its strategic reforms, the Organisation has designed an integrated RBM framework/log frame, linking strategic planning, results-based budgeting, and annual and individual work planning to monitoring and evaluation, and programme and staff performance reporting. **In 2018, 4S established a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) department** to take the lead in the development and implementation of a new monitoring and evaluation framework. The organization has also identified strengthening accountabilities, effectiveness and efficiencies in delivering results as one of the key priority areas of its Strategic Plan.

- 1.4. **Later on, the M&E department has been converted into “Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Knowledge Management” (MEL&KM)** to cater the wider aspects of the organization. The Framework builds on the organisation’s M&E experience; takes into consideration the strategic direction in which the Organisation is heading; acknowledges the challenges presented by the diversity of 4S programming and operations as well as the sources and characteristics of its funding; and draws on a wealth of M&E policies, and developed knowledge products based on all of these and ultimately share the products within and outside the organization.

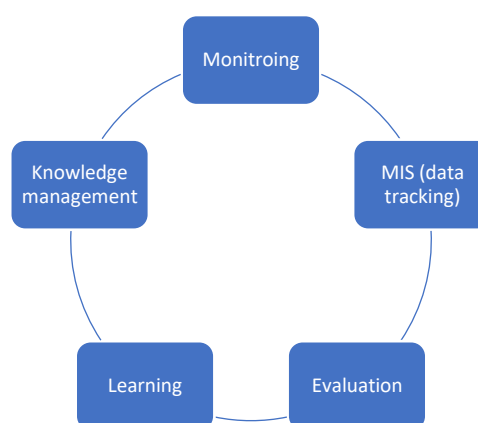


Figure 1: Main components of the MEL & KM Unit

- 1.5. While monitoring and evaluation are distinct functions, the Organisation recognizes their complementary and interdependent roles. Findings from prospective evaluation (or similar processes such as appraisal or baseline studies), for example, are useful in defining indicators for monitoring purposes. Moreover, results from monitoring progress towards results can help identify important evaluation questions. It is primarily for these reasons that the two functions are integrated into the present policy framework.

2. Key concepts & Definitions:

- 2.1. **Monitoring:** Monitoring is a continuous process to regularize and keep the activities on track. Spot the gap areas and enabling the management and other stakeholders for on time informed decision making and course-correction through the rigorous process of monitoring. The Organisation defines monitoring as a routine process of collecting and recording information in order to track progress towards expected results.
- 2.2. **Evaluation:** Evaluation is the systematic assessment (Executed periodically) of the design, implementation and/or results of a programme, project, activity, policy, strategy or other undertaking. The intention of evaluation is to provide credible and useful information with a view to determine the worth or significance of the undertaking, incorporate lessons learned into decision-making and enhances the overall quality of the Organisation's programming and operations. It's a method of establishing and measuring the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, efficacy, impact and sustainability of the organization as well as of any interventions. The nature of evaluation depends on type of intervention. Evaluation can be both internal and external and summative or formative. Evaluation should be need based and it is done in a planned manner.
- 2.3. **Learning:** Learning is a key factor for refining programming by adding value for improvement, revising strategies, updating plans and frameworks based on key lessons learnt, findings and recommendations. Learning primarily contributes to generating knowledge products, disseminating information, and helping both internal and external programme/project stakeholders use adaptive programming.
- 2.4. **Knowledge management:** Knowledge management (KM) is the process of organizing, creating, using, and sharing collective knowledge within an organization. Successful knowledge management includes developing knowledge products and disseminating it internally or externally.

3. Guiding principles, Norms & Processes:

- 3.1. **Monitoring:** The Organisation has introduced a number of tools to monitor progress towards results. These tools include medium-term strategic planning, results-based budgeting and work planning, and logical frameworks for projects. The monitoring is to track the target versus achievement at three levels-
 - (a) Organization-level planning;
 - (b) Regional-level planning;
 - (c) Project-level planning.

The Organisation recognizes the usefulness of logical frameworks as a tool to manage for results. Project proposals should include logical frameworks or other appropriate results formulations and specify major activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Performance indicators, means of verification and risks and assumptions should be specified for output and outcome level results; for projects or other undertakings in which an impact evaluation is to be performed, indicators of achievement and means of verification should also be specified for intended impacts.

Performance indicators should include baseline and target measures for expected results. In the event baseline information may not be available in the design phase or at the submission time of a proposal, managers should plan to obtain baseline or other relevant information within a reasonable period from project start-up (e.g. inception workshop) to ensure evaluability of results. When projects or undertakings are to be implemented jointly, logical frameworks should be discussed and agreed with respective partners.

For effective results-based monitoring and in order to ensure evaluability (the extent to which projects or undertakings can be evaluated both reliably and credibly), indicators should be formulated using SMART criteria (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound)-

- (a) **Specific:** The indicator is sufficiently clear as to what is being measured and specific enough to measure progress towards a result;
- (b) **Measurable:** The indicator is a reliable measure and is objectively verifiable. Qualitative measures should ideally be translated into some numeric form;
- (c) **Attainable:** The indicator can be realistically met;
- (d) **Relevant:** The indicator captures what is being measured (i.e. it is relevant to the activity/result);
- (e) **Time-bound:** The indicator is expected to be achieved within a defined period of time.

3.2. **Evaluation:** Evaluation serves the following purposes are to promote organizational learning and quality improvement, ensure accountability, improve informed decision-making and provide leverage to mobilize resources for outcome-based programming. The following five principles/norms/standards form the part of 4S india's evaluation policy framework-

- (a) **Utility:** Evaluation should be planned and conducted with a view to serve the information needs of its intended users, be they stakeholders internal or external to the Organisation. Evaluation recommendations should flow logically from findings, be actionable and be presented in a clear and timely manner with the intention of incorporating results into learning and decision-making processes.
- (b) **Accuracy and credibility:** Evaluation should be conducted with the necessary professional expertise and be based on the principle of impartiality. Evaluation should use appropriate data collection and analysis which produce accurate, valid and reliable information. Findings should be open to reporting strengths and weaknesses as well as successes and failures.
- (c) **Feasibility:** Evaluation should be as practical, politically viable and cost effective as possible, and should take into consideration time and financial and human resource requirements.
- (d) **Consultation, access to information and transparency:** Evaluation should be conducted in a transparent manner with stakeholder consultation and access to relevant information. To the extent feasible, stakeholders should be engaged and contribute to the evaluation process by providing views, and such views should be

reflected in evaluation findings in an impartial and balanced way. Consultants and others undertaking independent evaluation should have unrestricted access to information of the concerned programme, project or undertaking subject to evaluation, including project documents; terms of reference; training material; beneficiary views; results of decentralized evaluations, if relevant; and financial statements and reports, unless such information is considered by the Organisation to be sensitive or confidential.

- (e) **Propriety:** Evaluation should be undertaken in a legal and ethical manner with regard to the rights and welfare of those involved in and affected by assessments. Stakeholders invited to contribute to evaluation processes should be made aware of the purposes for and potential consequences of evaluation, and the Organisation should seek their consent prior to them taking part in any evaluation exercise.

The Organisation undertakes two broad categories of evaluations: corporate and decentralized. Corporate evaluations are defined as independent assessments conducted and/or managed by the Organisation’s Monitoring and Evaluation Section at the request of the Executive Director or at the request of programmes or other Organisation divisions for the purpose of providing independent evaluation of projects or other undertakings³. Such evaluations may be undertaken internally (conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Section) or externally (in which case expertise outside the Organisation would be retained). Corporate evaluations may also include reviews of decentralized evaluations on a selective and periodic basis for quality assurance purposes.

Decentralized evaluations are self-assessments conducted by the Organisation’s programmes, offices, units and sections. For the most part, decentralized evaluations are undertaken at the project or activity level, but may conceivably include any subject under any entity’s purview. While self-evaluation has similarities with the monitoring function, the assessment exercise should seek to ask and respond to key evaluation questions and include critical analysis and reflection based on the data collected.

Table 1: The categories and examples of evaluation

Category	Definition	Examples
Corporate	Independent evaluations or reviews undertaken or managed by the M&E Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic and policy evaluations - Meta evaluations - Thematic evaluations - Independent evaluation of program or projects - Reviews of decentralized, self-evaluations
Decentralized	Self-assessments conducted by programmes, units, sections or offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program or sub-program level, including project and activity evaluations (baseline studies, formative evaluations, outcome evaluations, etc.)

Evaluation may be performed at different times and address different elements of the

results chain, from assessing needs or determining baseline conditions at project conception to evaluating the impacts of a project’s contribution to development goals. Between these two points evaluations may include formative or other types of process-related assessments, evaluations of outputs, and/or summative evaluations focusing on different levels of outcomes. Given the Organisation’s high number of training-related services with learning objectives, it is useful to distinguish between intermediate outcomes (e.g. enhanced knowledge and skills of beneficiaries) and institutional outcomes (e.g. strengthened organizational capacities as the result of applied knowledge/skills, increased policy coherence or efficiency, etc.).

Table 2: Different types of evaluations

Timing	Types	Levels of Results	Remarks/Sample Evaluation Questions
Before the undertaking	Appraisal; quality at entry; baseline study, needs assessment	n/a	Depending on the scope of the project, evaluation may vary from a thorough examination of the entire results chain logic to a (rapid) assessment of training needs and/or determining baseline data indicators.
During the undertaking (process)	Real-time, formative, mid-term evaluation	Inputs	E.g. To what extent are human, financial and material resources <u>adequate</u> ?
		Actions	E.g. How <u>relevant</u> is the course to learning needs of beneficiaries?
After the undertaking (ex post)	Summative evaluation	Outputs	E.g. How <u>relevant</u> and <u>effective</u> were the delivered products (action plan) or services (training)? How <u>efficient</u> were outputs produced?
		Intermediate (short-term) outcome	The <u>first level effect</u> of products and services delivered, directly attributed to outputs. E.g. How much knowledge increased? Did skills improve? Was awareness raised?
		Institutional (medium-term)	<u>Subsequent effects</u> of products or services delivered? E.g. Was there retention and/or on-the-job application of knowledge/skills? Have organizational capacities increased? Are policy instruments more efficient?
		Impact	What is the <u>impact</u> of the outcomes? Were project goals met? How durable are the results over time?

3.3. **Learning:** 4S India views M&E as an opportunity to learn how to do things better, more effectively, with greater relevance, with more efficient utilization of resources and with greater and more sustaining impact. The results of M&E need to contribute to knowledge management and serve as the basis for enhancing the quality of its products and services.

3.4. **Knowledge management:** As one of the main purposes of evaluation, the creation, storage, management and dissemination of knowledge is essential. In view of promoting organizational learning and contributing to quality improvement of the Organisation’s products and services, an annual learning forum will be organized to share lessons learned on evaluation processes and outcomes.

Figure 2: List of the communication materials to be developed

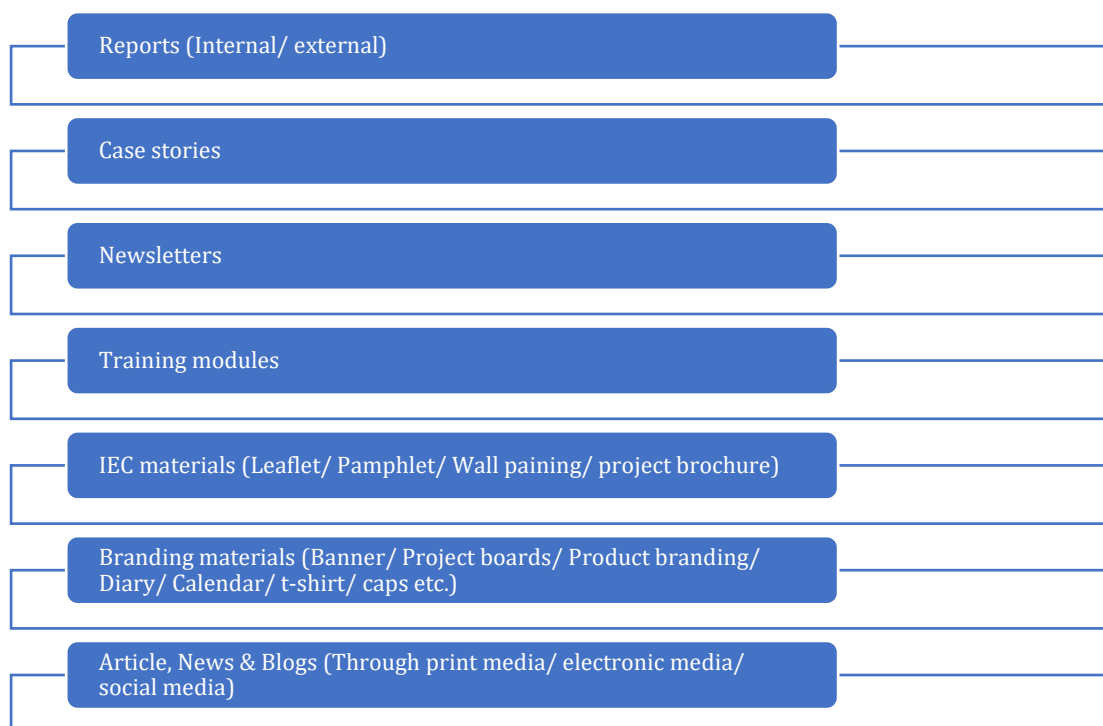
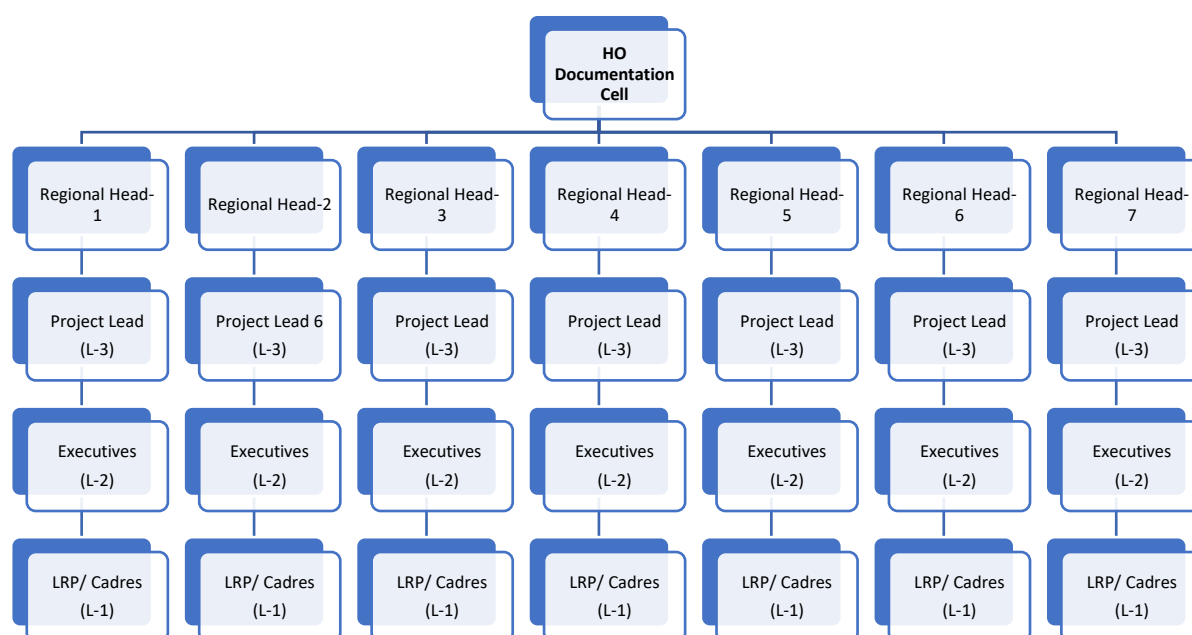


Table 3: Types of report to be developed

Type of report	Name of the report	Purpose of the report	Nature of report	Frequency of the report	Form of report
Internal report	Daily report	Daily basis activity tracking of the employees	Non-statutory	Daily basis	Through WhatsApp group
	Monthly report	Monthly basis outcome-indicator tracking of the projects	Non-statutory	Monthly basis	In the specific format via mail

	Board report	Tracking of quarterly progress and presenting to the Board	Statutory	Quarterly basis	In the specific format
	Monitoring report	To give suggestion by the Sr. management/ board members for rectification/ improvement	Non-statutory	Surprise visit	No specific format
External report	Donor report	To meet the requirement of donor	Non-statutory	Based on the need of donor	In the specific formats given by the respective donors
	Annual report	To track the initiatives taken in a FY	Statutory	Annual basis	In the specific format
	Study reports (Baseline, Mid-term, Endline)	To capture the status of the project components during- (a) Starting of the project, (b) Mid phase of the project, and (C) End of the project	Non-statutory	Based on the starting/ ending date of a project	Project-based customised format

Figure 3: Data collection flow



Dissemination of communication materials-

- i. Reports-**
 - a) Monthly report-
 - Sharing internally
 - b) Board report-
 - Sharing with BODs and Advisory committees
 - c) Monitoring report-
 - Sharing internally
 - d) Donor report-
 - Sharing with the donors
 - e) Annual report-
 - Sharing with the BODs
 - Sharing with the Stakeholders
 - Sharing in Website for outer world
 - f) Study report-
 - Sharing internally
 - Sharing with the donors

- ii. Case stories-**
 - Sharing with the donors
 - Uploading in the Website
 - Sharing through case writeshop
 - Publication of book

- iii. Newsletters-**
 - Internal sharing

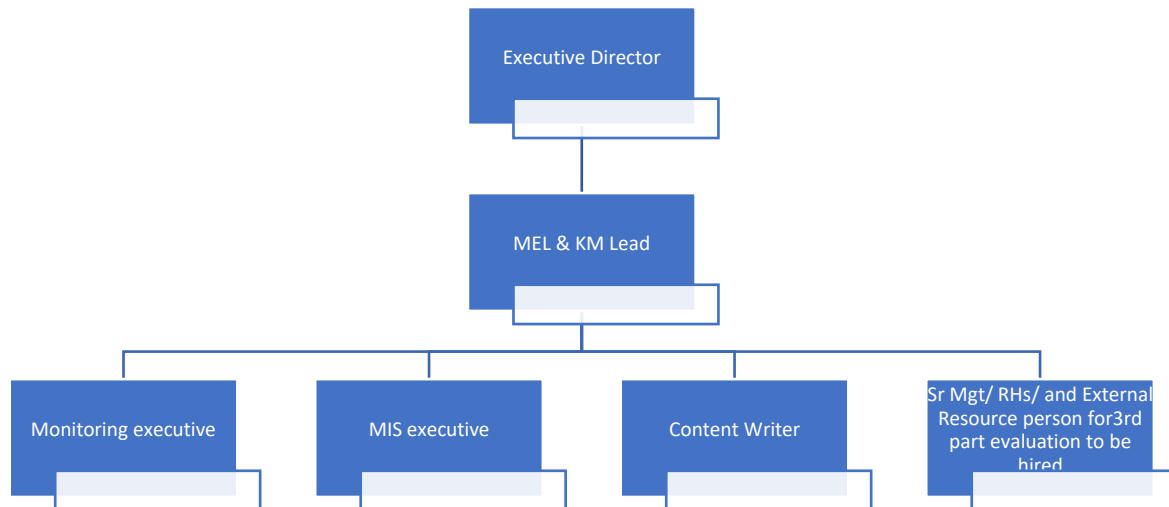
- iv. Training modules-**
 - Sharing with the Master trainers/ Cadres/ CRPs
 - Sharing with the beneficiaries

- v. IEC materials-**
 - Display in the operational area
 - Distribution among the beneficiaries

- vi. Branding materials-**
 - Displaying banner during any event
 - Displaying project boards in the beneficiaries' field
 - Using brand name and trademarks in the processed product by the FPO/ Entrepreneur/ Federation
 - Distribution of diary and calendar among the staff and stakeholders
 - Distribution of t-shirt & caps among staff

- vii. Article, News and Blogs-**
 - Coverage of important events and news by print media
 - Publishing news in Newspapers
 - Uploading photos & blogs in social media including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

4. MEL & KM HR structure:



5. Roles & Responsibilities:

Executive Director:

- Identifies projects and undertaking for, and requests the Dy. MEL & KM for corporate evaluations
- Submits the relevant documents to the Board for review, including the Organisation's Strategic Plans, Programme Performance Reports and Corporate Evaluation Reports

MEL & KM Lead:

- Leads the department and guiding the team to complete the assignment
- Ensures timely submission of all the mentioned activities with good quality
- Maintains a public depository of all knowledge products with a view to ensure transparency and facilitate the integration of lessons learned and best practices into the broader concept of knowledge management
- Oversees the development and maintenance of an intranet-based knowledge navigator tool to stock, manage and disseminate lessons-learned from evaluations

Monitoring Executive:

- Oversees the application of the policy framework, identifies bottlenecks and constraints and makes recommendations for updating the requirements or other elements of the framework, in line with international good practice, lessons learned as well as and the evolving programming and operational needs and characteristics of the Organisation;
- Facilitates regular interaction in-house with managers and other staff, collects feedback and facilitates learning on the framework;
- Conducts research and engages in critical and analytical reflection as well as issues recommendations to management for compliance with the framework;
- Prepares and circulates guidelines, checklists, templates and other tools to facilitate the application of the framework

Hired resources for Evaluation:

- (a) Develops and promotes standards for evaluation and quality assurance;
- (b) Conducts and/or manages corporate evaluations at the request of the Executive Director and/or programmes and other Organisation divisional entities;
- (c) Undertakes reviews of decentralized evaluations on periodic and selective basis for quality assurance purposes;
- (d) Prepares and maintains a depository of annual work plans;
- (e) Prepares, maintains and monitors the implementation of an annual evaluation plan based on scheduled corporate and decentralized evaluations;
- (f) Prepares a synthesis and maintains a compilation of Programme Performance Reports based on submissions from programme management;
- (g) Prepares a biennial Corporate Evaluation Report based on a review of completed corporate and decentralized evaluations;

MIS executive:

- (a) Collecting information about the technical requirements that each department must meet
- (b) Developing and evaluating computer systems that satisfy company requirements
- (c) Supplying resources and training required for subordinates to install and maintain new software programmes
- (d) Creating, managing, analysing, and debugging IT systems
- (e) Interpreting specifications and creating IT solutions that adhere to all requirements and financial restrictions
- (f) Assessing the efficiency of computer systems and enhancing them as necessary
- (g) Creating MIS documentation to facilitate efficient operations and simple system upkeep
- (h) Ensuring the privacy of all customers, employees and company records

Content Writer:

- (a) Supports project team to prepare different reports, collect those reports centrally and prepare compiled reports
- (b) Promotes knowledge management, organizational learning and lessons learned by keeping abreast of innovative practices in the field of evaluation and monitoring, identifying relevant state-of-the art techniques, tools and methods, and providing divisional units with guidance on the use of respective tools and methods;
- (c) Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the Organisation's products and services

Annex 1 – Glossary of Terms

Accomplishment

The achievement of specific results producing changes in behaviour or developmental conditions. See outcome.

Activity

Any action undertaken or work performed with the objective of transforming inputs into measurable outputs.

Baseline

Data describing a situation to be addressed by an undertaking which serve as the starting point for measuring performance.

Beneficiaries

Individuals, entities or groups which may be targeted or not and which may benefit directly or indirectly from a programme, project or other undertaking.

Best practices

Planning, organizational and/or managerial methods, processes, techniques or other practices which have produced consistent superior results to those achieved by other means.

Corporate evaluation

Independent evaluations undertaken and/or managed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Section.

Decentralized evaluation

Self-assessment evaluations conducted by programmes or other divisional entities of the Organisation.

Effectiveness

The extent to which a programme, project or other undertaking achieves its planned results (outputs outcomes and/or goals).

Efficiency

The cost effectiveness of transforming actions into outputs, taking into consideration alternative paths.

Evaluability

The extent to which an activity, project, programme or other undertaking can be subject to evaluation in a credible and reliable manner.

Evaluation

The systematic assessment of the design, implementation and/or results of a programme, project, activity, policy, strategy or other undertaking. The intention of evaluation is to provide credible and useful information, in view of determining the worth or significance of the undertaking, incorporating lessons learned into decision-making and enhancing the overall quality of the Organisation's programming and operations.

Event (or activity-event)

A major activity organized in the form of a briefing, conference, course, fellowship programme, lecture, meeting, seminar, workshop, side-event, webinar, etc. and announced on the Organisation's online events management system.

Ex ante evaluation

An evaluation performed prior to the implementation of an undertaking. See baseline.

Ex post evaluation

An evaluation performed after the implementation of an undertaking.

Formative Evaluation

A type of evaluation conducted during the implementation of a project or other undertaking with the aim to provide information that will guide project improvement. This type of evaluation typically focuses on determining whether a programme is being implemented according to plan.

Indicator

A quantitative or qualitative measure of programme performance that is used to demonstrate change and which details the extent to which results are being or have been achieved.

Institutional outcome

Effects produced as the result of intermediate outcomes. E.g. increased organizational effectiveness as the result of the application of knowledge or skills by beneficiaries or as the results of other intermediate outcomes.

Intermediate outcome

Subsequent effects of products and/or services delivered. E.g. increased level of knowledge or skills retained after training or knowledge and skills applied on the job as a result of training.

Impact

The totality and/or long-term effects of an undertaking. Effects may be positive or negative, intended or unintended.

Knowledge management

A range of strategies, processes and techniques used to create, share and manage knowledge.

Lessons learned

A generalization derived from an evaluation and applicable to a generic rather than a specific situation.

Logical framework

A results-based project framework design based on a causal relationship linking inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact, with objectively verifiably indicators to measure progress towards the achievement of results.

Monitoring

The routine process of collecting and recording information in order to track progress towards expected results.

Output

Final products or services delivered.

Outcome

Changes in behaviour or development conditions.

Project

A set of planned and interrelated activities designed to achieve specific objectives within a given budget, time period and operating framework.

Programme

A set of sub-programmes, projects and/or activities producing outputs and accomplishments with a defined budget and under a set of specific objectives linked to the Organisation's mandate and organizational goals.

Special event

An event organized at the corporate level with the participation of high-ranking personalities. Special events include meetings of the Board of Trustees; meetings organized at the request of the United Nations Secretary-General (Annual Retreat of the Secretary-General, Annual Seminar of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Annual Retreat of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs); as well as the Geneva Lecture Series and Panel Discussions organized in connection with the Board of Trustees.

Undertaking

A general term for any programme, project, activity, policy, strategy, etc. which may be subject to evaluation.

Summative Evaluation

A type of evaluation intended to provide information about the merit, worth and impact of a programme or project (OIOS). Summative evaluation is usually conducted at the end of a programme or project to determine if anticipated results were achieved.

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