

# MASDAR

## CAPABILITY STATEMENT IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION



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## MASDAR EXPERIENCE IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Based on experiences gained by governments and funding agencies, monitoring and evaluation has recently assumed a much greater role in project cycle management. In the more successful programmes it is no longer a 'fringe' component but has been fully integrated into everyday management decision making.

MASDAR has been at the forefront of M&E design and in the implementation of these newly developing strategies.

**Monitoring** : The processes of monitoring include a number of facets. Monitoring is essentially an on-going record of progress compared to planned activities and targets. For this purpose an effective and agreed list of key-indicators must be established. These are derived both from the project logical framework and from each successive annual work plan and budget. The process therefore requires maintenance of a complete project documentation and reference library as well as baseline surveys and assessments to provide the information 'bench-mark'. It is essential also that an archive is maintained of this, and other relevant, monitored data to feed the processes of evaluation and management information. For rapid and easy access, this 'data-base' should also be in electronic format.

**Evaluation** : The processes of evaluation must be closely linked with monitoring. Here too, a number of facets are included. A process of 'on-going' evaluation is required during project implementation. This will be aimed at providing a feed-back on the 'effectiveness' of project strategies and component implementation. It will be guided by the 'inputs' aspect of the project log-frame and the 'activities' planned in component work plans. Data sources for this process will be both from the regular monitoring system and from specific topic investigations in the form of case studies or representative surveys.

Another process of on-going evaluation consists of verification visits to target sites or structures. These are best made by a team including technical specialists and administrative officials directly responsible for component implementation. On-site assessments can then be discussed with field staff and targeted beneficiaries.

The overall process will normally include periodic evaluations. These may be 'impact' studies making trend comparisons against the 'bench-marks' established at project start-up or where capacity exists, these studies would be conducted by an internal project (or government) M and E unit or contracted to a local research facility. These periodic evaluations may include mid-term and

end-of-project assessments by external teams contracted as part of the project funding agreement.

The complementarity between monitoring and evaluation is seen in the following table:

**Table 1**

ITEM	MONITORING	EVALUATION
Frequency	Periodic, regular	Episodic
Main action	Keeping track/oversight	Assessment
Basic purpose	Improve efficiency and adjust work plan	Improve effectiveness, impact, future programming
Focus	Inputs, outputs, process outcomes, work plans	Effectiveness, relevance, impact, cost-effectiveness
Information sources	Routine or sentinel systems, field observation, progress reports, rapid assessments	Same, plus surveys, studies
Undertaken by	Programme managers, community workers, community (beneficiaries), supervisors and funders	Programme managers supervisors, funders external evaluators and community (beneficiaries)
Reporting to	Programme managers, community workers, community (beneficiaries), supervisors and funders	Programme managers supervisors, funders, policy-makers, beneficiaries and community (beneficiaries)

**Management information :** The processes of monitoring and evaluation can involve a great deal of data collection, data management and analysis. To be of use in project implementation, this data must first be processed into ‘information.’ This means it has to be analysed, interpreted and presented in a form that can be readily understood and acted upon by management and a project implementation team. Management information is a vital component of M & E.



*MIS training in Zambia*

A well designed Management Information System (MIS) will not only provide timely reports to management on physical progress and financial costs; it will also form the framework for the entire processes of monitoring and evaluation.

By establishing data collection systems from key-informants at a number of levels and

presenting this as standardised information reports, the MIS enables a project management team to agree strategy adjustments during implementation on a timely basis. These MIS reporting formats also enable project management reports to the client and funding agency to be made according to requirements. Taken further, and as a logical development to participatory strategies, MIS information reports can be used as a feed-back for review discussions at field staff and beneficiary community levels.

The successful and effective development of these processes largely depend on developing a clear understanding and team-work between M&E component staff, management and the project components. MASDAR believes strongly in this team-work approach which has been developed through many years of M&E experience in developing countries.

## 2. EXPERIENCE

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT PROJECTS	
PROJECT TITLE	COUNTRY
Isiolo District Support Programme	Kenya
M & E for PROSCARP	Malawi
Safety Nets : Monitoring, Lesson Learning and Strategy	Malawi
Extension Impact Study	Nepal
Research Impact Study	Nepal
Kano State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority	Nigeria
District Development Support Programme	Zambia
Agricultural Research and Extension Project	Zambia
Socio Economic Survey of Cocoa Farming Community	Ghana
Smallholder Macadamia Nut Project	Malawi
Southern Province Household Food Security	Zambia

Monitoring and Evaluation has been an important component of many MASDAR projects and we have substantial experience of all aspects of M & E from project appraisal, through to project progress monitoring and post project impact studies.

The largest M & E contract we have managed was on the Kano State Rural Development Project in **Nigeria** where we supplied 4 expatriate M & E officers for 5 years each supported by a large team of enumerators and support staff. These provided the ongoing management information needed to manage this US \$450 million programme.

Since the mid 1980's we have ensured that all MASDAR projects operate against a detailed logical framework and have developed an internal MIS which monitors project progress against logframe targets. Our experience includes the provision of long term M & E advisers to DDSP, **Zambia** (2 advisers for 6 years each); Zambia Agricultural Research and Extension Project (1 adviser for 4 years); Southern Province Household Food Security Project, **Zambia** (1 adviser for 3 years) and South Kasala ADP, **Sudan** (1 adviser for 2 years). We currently have M & E staff working on projects in **Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Zambia, Tanzania and The Gambia**.

In addition MASDAR has supplied numerous short term M & E advisers to assist with the setting up and implementation of appropriate systems.



*DDSP M & E Officer tests a survey questionnaire*

### **3. INDICATIVE STAFFING**

**John Doughty** : John is a specialist socio-economist with over 25 years relevant experience in Africa. He has substantial practical experience in survey design, data handling, analysis, base-line surveys and impact studies. On the MASDAR Proscarp project in Malawi he has pioneered a community based monitoring system, enabling project stakeholders to evaluate project progress.

**Lyulph Hesling** : Lyulph has extensive world wide experience in designing and implementing monitoring and evaluation systems at project, programme and ministry level. This has included training enumerators and preparing M & E operations manuals. He has worked with MASDAR on M & E assignments in Nigeria, Sudan and Zambia.

**Nick Freeland** : Nick is Managing Director of MASDAR Technology and is responsible for overall management control of all MASDAR's consultancy and training activities in information systems. He has spent twenty years working in the overseas agricultural, agribusiness and rural development sectors, with emphasis on computer-based management systems, database design, electronic communications and networking. By combining the necessary natural resource and high technology skills, he has become a specialist in the use of computers for development applications. With formal training in Systems Analysis and in Management Practices, he has had practical experience of introducing information systems on a range of development projects in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and the South Pacific: from marketing information systems to food security analysis, from business planning to project monitoring and evaluation and from survey data processing to geographic information systems (GIS).

**Mathias Grunewald** : Matthias Grunewald is a leading exponent of M & E who has not only set up many project M & E systems but has also written training manuals on the subject, reviewed the relevant advantages of different systems for different donors, and has trained both senior management and junior enumerators on the day to day operations of practical M & E systems. He believes strongly that M & E is a management tool and therefore systems must be simple, practical and cost effective if they are to work. Matthias has undertaken several M & E assignments for MASDAR in the last 2 years including designing and setting up a MIS / M & E system for the World Bank Funded Agricultural Research and Extension project in Nepal.



*Local communities involved in Monitoring Project Progress : Nepal*

## 4. SUMMARY

Monitoring and evaluation have in recent years enjoyed growing interest for a number of good reasons. First, projects have become increasingly complex by embracing an even larger set of objectives that range from income generation, social services provision, environmental quality enhancement, to beneficiary participation, often with special attention to gender issues. Tracking of activities and determining the immediate and wider effects of such interventions calls for strong mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Second, many projects are no longer rigidly conceptualised at the time of preparation (*blue-print approach*). Instead, to varying degrees, projects are designed with deliberate flexibility to adjust scope and activities according to new insights and needs recognising that development is a process which takes place in a dynamic and unpredictable environment (*process approach*). In order to derive full benefit from the greater flexibility in the design and execution of interventions, which the process approach to planning offers, a continuous flow of information is essential. Inherent to this approach are intensive monitoring and frequent reviews to assess the validity of the intervention logic.

And third, funding agencies, which themselves have come under increasing public scrutiny and budgetary control, demand more and more evidence of project performance and 'value for money'.

MASDAR has 25 years experience in developing project M & E systems and has a well established, operational, Management Information System in use on all its projects. It has access to first class M & E consultants and a proven track record in using them to maximum effect.

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