



Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DM&E) Fact Sheet

Components of DM&E

Design refers to the development of a project strategy and plan for monitoring and evaluation using a log frame. This process involves thinking logically about the project and what it seeks to accomplish. Good design is always informed by a thorough needs and resource assessment.(1)

Successful project design involves three key elements:

- Using sound logic to map out an effective strategy
- Ensuring that the selected strategy is relevant to the target population
- Planning for monitoring and evaluation at the design stage

Monitoring of project performance is an ongoing function that involves data collection and analysis throughout the life of a project. Information and learning taken from monitoring activities are used to make adjustments during the life cycle of the project.(2)

Evaluation is a one-time function that reports on the progress of actual and expected results. Information and learning from evaluation is used to inform future projects and organizational learning.(3)

Monitoring and evaluation plan is both a planning and management tool. It is an extension of the log frame that provides information needed to track the progress of IRC projects. It signifies collecting and analyzing data and reporting on project achievements.(4)

Key DM&E Principles

The Purpose of DM&E (5)

- Design high quality programs
- Plan appropriately for monitoring and evaluation
- Respond effectively to the needs of refugees

Elements of DM&E (6)

Sound design, monitoring and evaluation (DM&E) enables IRC to:

- Measure and document project achievements
- Capitalize on lessons learned to improve project quality and organizational learning
- Communicate clearly to partners and key stakeholders (refugees, host communities, donors, other resettlement agencies, local government, etc.) about project achievements and progress

At the core of IRC's approach to DM&E are two tools: the IRC log frame and IRC's Program Framework. The IRC log frame encourages clear and disciplined thinking about what the project will achieve and outlines necessary steps. IRC's Program Framework helps IRC staff think strategically and structure interventions that contribute to durable solutions. (7)



The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan

The M&E plan serves to (8) :

Plan – The M&E plan maps out how IRC will measure progress. Measuring and reporting on achievements will require time and planning.

Communicate – An M&E plan helps to “tell the story” of the project.

Focus on what is important – An M&E plan helps program teams focus on what is truly important by directing attention towards monitoring achievements.

Demonstrate accountability – An M&E plan assigns responsibility for reporting on specific indicators and gathering baseline data of designated individuals.

Organize learning – The information collected and analyzed as part of the M&E plan is important “intelligence” for making decisions.



Tools: The M&E Checklist

The M&E plan should answer these questions:

Baseline Data

1. What data will you need to collect for the baseline?
2. What data collection tools (methods) will you use for collecting the baseline data? (consult relevant TU)
3. When will you collect the baseline?
4. Do you have an accurate estimate of how long it will take to gather this data? (consult relevant TU)
5. What resources are required to collect the baseline data?
6. Is collection of baseline data reflected in your work plan?
7. Do you have the technical capacity on your staff?

Planning for Data Collection

8. What data do you need to collect throughout the life cycle of the program in order to adequately monitor your indicators? Be sure you have separated the 'nice to know' from the 'need to know' and are collecting only data that is essential.
9. What data collection tools (methods) will you use?
10. When (how often) will you collect this data?
11. Who will be responsible for collecting this data?
12. Is there sufficient staff and necessary transportation to collect this data?
13. Is this reflected in your work plan?

Planning for Data Analysis

14. How often will you analyze the data you collect?
15. Who is responsible for ensuring the data analysis is conducted?
16. Who needs to participate in the data analysis discussion/exercise? (field staff, key stakeholders, partners, etc.)
17. How will the data be presented?
18. Who is responsible for decision-making based on the data analysis?
19. How will this be communicated to partners (stakeholders and donors)?



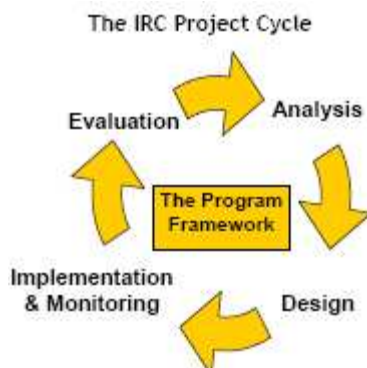
Project Cycle Management, The Log Frame and D,M&E

Project Cycle Management (PCM) describes the activities and processes that bring information into programming decisions. Each project's life cycle consists of a series of phases. Each phase includes data collection and analysis that informs subsequent phases, creating a circle of learning and change. (9)

IRC's simple project cycle consists of four phases:

- Analysis
- Design
- Implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation.

During the analysis phase of the cycle, IRC collects and analyzes information that will serve as the basis for project design. The design of a project (represented in the log frame) guides implementation and monitoring. Implementation and monitoring produce data that feed into evaluation. Finally, the lessons learned and data taken from evaluations are used in the analysis (or reanalysis) phase and the cycle continues.



In practice, the life of a project does not follow an easy circular path, nor will the phases of the cycle be strictly distinct from one another.

It is helpful to think about the project cycle as having “feedback loops” that may happen at any stage. A project team may look at monitoring data during implementation and find that something is not working as planned. The team may decide to revisit the design of the project to change or refine it. Similarly, when a project conducts a midterm evaluation, the findings should be used to adjust implementation of the project design.

The project cycle is helpful because it demonstrates that project design is not static. We often assume that design is fixed once a proposal is written and a project funded. In fact, redesign is possible and even likely. The cycle shows how data collection and analysis are crucial to decision-making. New design, or redesign, should be based on the learning that results from data collection through assessment, monitoring and evaluation.





References

1. International Rescue Committee (IRC). *Refugee Youth Programming Design, Monitoring & Evaluation (DM&E) Guide*. Rev. January 2007, 38.
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5. DM&E, 35.
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