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## **Strengthening Resilience in Tsunami-affected Communities in Sri Lanka and India Getting Started on Monitoring and Evaluation Plans Notes for Partners**

**Stephen Tyler, February 2007**

### **1. Introduction**

Project partners need to develop an evaluation plan to guide their monitoring, data collection and reporting on project accomplishments. The nature of this plan will depend on the purposes to which the evaluation should be put. At a minimum, evaluation plans will have to meet the requirements of CIDA and IDRC to demonstrate that funds have been effectively spent to achieve the stated objectives and anticipated results. CIDA will probably request an external evaluation later in the project, but that evaluation will rely largely on information the project itself generates, and will be linked closely to the results-based framework the project partners themselves have already developed (see Annex II).

However there are other potential users of evaluation insights. Project managers will want to determine how they are doing before it is too late in the project cycle to make changes. Project team members will want to measure the progress of their work, and share lessons with colleagues in other partner agencies, in order to learn better from their experience and to modify their plans if strategies are not working. And because the projects are all aimed at creating new opportunities for poor coastal communities, community members themselves may want to evaluate the performance of the project in terms of their own expectations or of the agreements made at the outset. Indeed, because the learning of community members is essential to the sustainability of any longer term interventions, evaluation of relevant project interventions by members of the community could be an important capacity-building tool for the project.

This discussion paper is meant to provide an introduction and some preliminary discussion points to project partners prior to their Outcome Mapping training, in order to ease their efforts to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan before the end of March. The paper will briefly remind partners of the Results Based Management approach that CIDA uses for reporting, and introduce a Performance Measurement Framework that could be used for CIDA purposes. The paper will also introduce two other evaluation tools likely to be helpful to project partners: Outcome Mapping and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation. Both of these are well documented in publications available from IDRC or on their website. Obviously, there will be overlaps and synergies between these three approaches. Partners should not expect to undertake three autonomous and parallel evaluation efforts. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, but many information sources will be shared. The different evaluation strategies will be helpful in demonstrating project results to audiences with different interests (e.g. other NGOs, government agencies, other donors, researchers). This introduction is only intended to orient partners to the likely uses of these techniques, as further training will be provided by IDRC.

## 2. Results Based Management

CIDA's RBM framework uses a logical framework for defining the changes that the project expects to achieve in its environment. The Logical Framework Analysis prepared at the outset of this project is presented as Annex II here for reference. Because many project staff have joined since the original LFA was produced, it may be worth clarifying the key elements of the framework here.

Results-based management is a system by which a project increases its effectiveness through:

1. Defining realistic expected results
2. Identifying project beneficiaries and designing interventions to meet their needs
3. Monitoring progress towards results with the use of appropriate indicators
4. Identifying and managing risks
5. Learning lessons and integrating these into project management decisions
6. Reporting on results achieved and the resources used to achieve them

This framework defines a **result** as “a describable or measurable change resulting from a cause and effect relationship”. The framework is meant to integrate all programming within CIDA's corporate responsibilities through ensuring the project results contribute to the agency's overall objectives, and that CIDA, Canadian partners and developing country partners agree on their respective roles in contributing to achievement of overall project results at different levels. The approach is meant to be participatory, transparent and simple, particularly in terms of data collection and its application in project management. All project partners are expected to use the LFA to guide project implementation and measure results. Lessons from project implementation are intended to permit changes to the LFA, as long as these are justified in terms of improving the effective use of resources in achieving developmental results.

The two key elements of this framework are **change** (clearly specified, observable transformation of a group, organization, community, society or country), and **causation** (the project needs to logically demonstrate that its actions led to the change). A project provides inputs (expertise, funds, ideas or technologies, administration) and organizes these into activities that lead to change. The project's developmental results are the **outputs** that are the consequences of successfully completed activities it has organized involving intermediaries or sub-groups of stakeholders. At the end of the project, this series of outputs generated by the project should lead to the achievement of specified **outcomes** at a broader level of aggregation for the entire target group. Ultimately, long-term results that are the logical consequences of these outcomes will produce an important development **impact** for the society as a whole.

The logical linkages between project activities, outputs and outcomes are conditioned by risks which the project may be able to manage or reduce, but cannot control. As the project progresses, and the results of the project extend beyond activities to influence target groups, risks increase and the control of the project itself diminishes. Many other factors begin to influence outcomes and impact. The point of identifying risks is not to reduce the responsibility of project managers, but to help them identify ways to reduce these risks, or to respond as the risks change, in order to better achieve overall outcomes and impacts.

The Performance Management Framework is a guide to regular and timely collection of performance information to aid in reporting progress towards expected results, both internally and to CIDA. A sample performance management framework has been included here as Annex I, to be completed by partners in subsequent discussions. The PMF adopts the performance indicators from the LFA (as modified, if needed) for each of the project's results statements (outputs and outcomes). Partners then specify the data sources, collection details and responsibility for assembly of the data required to report on progress. Indicators can be quantitative (numbers, percentages, ratios, frequency, variance); or qualitative (presence vs absence, quality, extent, level, judgements, perceptions). Project managers should ensure that indicators are simple and that data can be readily collected to meet project requirements for internal management, iterative redirection of program efforts, and for reporting. The responsibilities and timing for data collection and analysis depend on reporting requirements, or on internal management decision-making, but frequent review of progress generally allows project managers to better redirect resources to increase the effectiveness of project interventions and achieve the expected results.

### 3. Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping, as a project planning and evaluation tool, has many of the same objectives as RBM. The main difference lies in its approach to assessing project outcomes and impacts. OM recognizes the essential contradiction of trying to measure and control project results, which is that **if the project is successful**, it will have less and less control as the results chain progresses from project inputs to organized activities, to outputs, to outcomes and eventual impacts. Successful development interventions are adopted by target beneficiaries, and then modified and adapted by these and other users in response to various influences, so that their eventual impact on society is difficult to attribute to any single cause. *While RBM relies on plausible logical models of how the influence of the project plays a role in leading to such changes, OM permits project partners to more precisely specify the process of change, measure their influence on it, and modify project implementation appropriately if the change process unfolds in unexpected ways.*

Outcome mapping is especially valuable for helping track the dynamics of change amongst those groups and organizations that a project is trying to directly influence. It is designed to help partners identify changes in behaviour, in relationships, or in activities of other groups. It is not designed for tracking quantitative changes in external conditions or in project outputs. Like RMG, the approach offers a framework for project partners (managers, project staff, and potentially, the organizations they are working with most closely on the ground) to discuss together the kinds of changes that the project sets out to achieve. Where OM differs is that it compels project partners to more specifically identify the individuals, groups and organizations with which they will work directly to create eventual development impacts; and to elaborate the kinds of changes they expect these organizations to adopt.

By detailing how these qualitative changes might take place progressively from simple to more complex transformations, project partners elaborate a "model" of how they believe complex developmental situations might evolve. They can then use this simple model to track actual changes and modify their assumptions, manage project risks, and change strategies for influencing this behaviour, while providing empirical evidence of that influence. OM provides tools for structuring learning processes in the course of project implementation to better adapt to

dynamic development contexts. By directing attention to the dynamics of developmental change, rather than towards any idealized result, OM avoids an overemphasis on static indicators.

Key elements of the OM approach include the identification of **boundary partners** as those organizations; groups and individuals with whom the project plans to work directly to achieve development results. The project partners will have direct interactions with these groups, organizations and individuals in the hope of changing their behaviour, their relationships, or their actions. The project cannot achieve ultimate development objectives itself. It can only control the actions of staff, and the direct activities it undertakes (spending funds, purchasing equipment, conducting training, etc). In order to have development impacts, the project works with other organizations directly. These partners mark the boundaries of the project's direct influence and control. Beyond these boundaries, the project has no direct control. However, the project can demonstrate how the changed behaviours of boundary partners will lead to further development results as they interact with other organizations themselves.

For each of the boundary partners identified by the project, they will also identify specific behaviours, relationships and activities which they anticipate will change as a result of the effects of the project. These changes are called **outcome challenges**. The project will be “challenged” to track these outcomes and the ways in which it attempts to influence them. In order to identify how the changes will take place, and to track the progression of the process of change from initial responsive steps to more active engagement and eventual transformation of the boundary partner behaviour, partners specify a series of progressive **progress markers**, which are simple and easily visible, specific examples of behaviours that demonstrate the kinds of changes which ought to be anticipated.

The elaboration of a **strategy map** allows project partners to specify different types of actions they will undertake to influence individuals or organizations directly, or to influence the environment in which they operate. By tracking progress markers and reviewing strategies, the project can modify its approach in response to the dynamics of the development process as it unfolds. OM also offers a set of tools for assessing and improving organizational performance, in relation to programming objectives.

#### **4. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation**

The key question in PM&E is “who will use the results of evaluation?” It is important that the users of evaluation have a role in planning and structuring the process. They have the greatest incentive to be engaged if the evaluation produces lessons of value to them. Most project evaluation frameworks are undertaken by external actors to assess the performance of interventions that they have designed and implemented, even if the results are primarily intended to benefit designated target groups in the community. Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) recognizes that poor women and men are not merely the targets of external program interventions, but autonomous social actors who use their skills and capacities as individuals and in collaboration with others to try to achieve their own objectives. If communities are intended to be the beneficiaries of project results, PM&E provides a tool to help them determine how progress should be measured and results acted upon.

The process of engaging the community along with other project partners in evaluation of project interventions offers two potential advantages: it can be more *effective* in creating learning opportunities for local project partners; and it helps to *build capacity* of local community actors. Part of this capacity-building is to model important governance values, such as participation, accountability and transparency, by supporting processes that use these features to guide collective local engagement in project evaluation. PM&E is a way to put local people in charge of learning, developing skills and demonstrating that their views count. PM&E contributes to the empowerment of local development partners, rather than merely serving as an accountability mechanism to external agents.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation is a structured process by which local individuals and groups who are most involved in applying the results of development projects can determine how to assess the project elements that are of greatest importance to them. The PM&E process should be an essential part of project implementation managed by the project team. Like other participatory processes, it can be time-consuming. Partners engaged in the project have to interact to reach a shared understanding of the meaning of key elements of the evaluation process, of their different roles, and of the planning, monitoring and analysis tasks they will undertake jointly.

A process of PM&E may be relevant to the capacity-building and learning objectives of a project as part of the project implementation methodology. In other words, the development and application of systematic critical assessment and learning skills at the community level may be part of the objectives of project implementation, rather than only an element of the project management team's evaluation efforts. But inevitably the insights of community-based or participatory evaluation also provide helpful feedback to project managers, through the process of joint learning. They demonstrate in particular the differences in perception and priorities between local and external agents of development. They are helpful in revealing hidden assumptions and in exposing insights that may not have been originally intended in the formal project planning process. They also are helpful in identifying unexpected constraints or barriers to local sustainability of project activities.

## **5. Comparing different evaluation approaches**

Of the three evaluation mechanisms, RBM and its associated tools are designed primarily for accountability. Results are formally articulated, and nest hierarchically within a project, from the simplest and most direct cause-effect relations, to intermediate and then much more distant outcomes moderated by many intervening factors. By articulating the logical framework linking project inputs and activities to results, these results can be tied to the programming goals and objectives of the sponsoring organization. Evaluation using RBM indicators demonstrates whether the project has achieved expected results, as measured by the indicators, and is therefore typically undertaken at intervals after project activities have been completed. RBM is designed to assess *results*, not *processes* undertaken in the project (these can be especially important in affecting the outcomes of participatory projects).

Outcome mapping is designed mainly for planning, and learning from, complex development projects that rely for their success on the changes and actions introduced by many external

organizations. The methodology compels users to disaggregate organizational relationships, actions and behavioural changes into discrete, progressive, observable changes. This obliges users to articulate a model of change that can then be used empirically to assess progress. The lessons of this experience are intended to feed into ongoing project management by enabling modification of action strategies adopted by the project. Over the long term, this tool is intended to build organizational learning and competence.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation is a tool for strengthening the capacity of communities for learning. It is intended to help development beneficiaries to better articulate what results are important to them, and how they should be measured. The process is ongoing through the life of the project. It can also be used to improve planning, strengthen learning, better understand different perspectives as well as to demonstrate accountability to project partners (including, but not limited to, donors). PM&E is designed to respond to community needs and insights, and to strengthen internal processes of governance, transparency, and consultation. This improves the ability of local partners to work with other agents of development, to better define needs, plan activities, identify outcomes and lessons for future activities.

All three approaches offer mechanisms to generate insights into project implementation as the project unfolds, rather than waiting until the end of the project to have an outsider who does not understand the project try to do the evaluation. At that stage, evaluation results may be of interest to a donor for accountability purposes, but are of little value in improving project management. RBM and OM can be undertaken in a highly participatory manner, thereby introducing some of the principles of PM&E. But both RBM and OM are formal and often elaborate structures, which would take many community groups a long time to feel comfortable with. PM&E approaches may be more flexible and responsive processes and easier for local people to lead.

By sharing results from different kinds of evaluation, all the partners involved in development projects will gain a better understanding of the ways in which the project resources have been used, the effects they have had, the extent to which changes have been positive or negative, intended or unintended, and the factors which relate to the mechanisms of project implementation. All three evaluation approaches can provide useful feedback to project managers at different stages of the project.

## **6. Getting Started**

Any evaluation plan, regardless of the methods adopted, will need to address a series of common issues.

1. Rationale for evaluation: project partners need to start by identifying the reasons for their evaluation work. Why is this being undertaken? What contributions will the evaluation make?
2. Who will use the results: the users of evaluation have the greatest incentive to contribute to and guide the process of evaluation. Who are they? There can be a variety of different users identified, but care should be taken to recognize that different users have different interests, and therefore different information and analytical needs.
3. What should be evaluated: the different approaches place emphasis in slightly different places. RBM emphasizes the evaluation of pre-defined results, defined as outputs and

outcomes. OM emphasizes the evaluation of progress towards pre-defined behavioural changes in specific groups or organizations the project is trying to influence. PM&E is more flexible in being able to address results, processes, outcomes, and project reach (who is affected).

4. How to determine change: all of the different approaches rely on the definition of indicators of change. These are to be monitored, measured and reported in the evaluation process. Indicators should be clear, measurable, consistent in what they represent, sensitive to the change which they are intended to demonstrate, and accurate in terms of meaning the same thing to different people. Data collection is of course very costly and time-consuming. The art of evaluation consists in part of determining the minimum amount of key information that needs to be collected, and the appropriate degree of imprecision acceptable.
5. Who is responsible: evaluation tasks include planning and design, as well as ongoing monitoring and analysis of data. Who should be involved? Who will lead these tasks? Who will be responsible for ensuring they are accomplished?
6. Timing: when do different evaluation tasks need to be accomplished? How can they be most easily coordinated?

For this project, the key points of departure for evaluation planning include the LFA and the project proposal, which outline the main objectives and anticipated results of the project. The indicators already identified in the LFA form the basis for the performance management framework (Annex I, to be completed). Baseline data collection already undertaken has been oriented to these indicators.

In addition, the project will need to consider who are the different groups and organizations with whom it interacts directly. What is the nature of the project's relations with these different groups? Is the intent of the project to change the behaviour of these groups through its activities, or to coordinate with and support them in behaviours that are already underway? Is it important to involve them in the evaluation process? How will this help key learning processes in the project? The project teams also need to keep in mind that results important to them (such as rehabilitation of coastal vegetation) may be evaluated differently by other groups (e.g. communities or state governments).

The project will address both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. How does the project ensure that crucial qualitative outcomes are carefully tracked, instead of putting too much emphasis on quantitative indicators because they are easier to monitor?

Finally, it is important that the project recognize that joint learning with partners requires social interaction and interpretation. Social interaction means the potential for conflict, and for power relations to intervene. Learning processes and interactions, including those for evaluation, must be structured with these factors in mind in order to manage disruptions with care.

## **Resources**

Results-Based Management in CIDA

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218132656-PPK>

Outcome Mapping

[http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Voices for Change: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in China

[http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26686-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26686-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

**ANNEX I: Performance Management Framework**

	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Collection methods</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Impact</b> Coastal communities can manage disasters more effectively using biophysical and socio-economic tools and local planning processes.					
<b>Outcomes</b>					
1) Bioshield management system assures sustainability and local benefits	1) Bioshield condition: survival rates, density and size of seedlings at conclusion of project.				
2) Technical and participatory management capacity built at the local level to sustain bioshield and VIC / VKC	2) Committee members report satisfaction with provisions for resource access and benefit-sharing. 2b) Local NGOs have new programs to support bioshield and VKC / VIC as part of village development efforts.				
3) Pilot communities (especially women and poor) have strengthened their livelihoods through better access to and control of productive natural resources and information.	3a) Larger percentage of families originally below poverty line have increased their income above the poverty line 3b) Larger percentage of women-headed households showing increased income 3c) Number of new enterprises started by men and women 3d) Groundwater quality improved through rehabilitation schemes ( <b>SL</b> )				
4) Local governments and other organizations develop effective Disaster risk reduction plans	4a) Presence of village-based DRR plans produced collaboratively by local organizations 4b) DRR plans adopted by local government				

	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Collection methods</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
	4c) Village-based DRR plans influence senior government plans <b>(SL)</b>				
5) Women participate more actively in community decision-making about natural resource management and information	5) Increase in female membership on management committees, and in leadership positions amongst local organizations				
<b>Outputs</b>					
1) Ecosystem rehabilitation through mangrove and non-mangrove plantations at suitable sites near project villages	1) Area of mangrove and non-mangrove bioshields established				
2) Village committees established and working on ecosystem management	2a) Committee membership includes resource users, diverse social groups and local government. 2b) Increased understanding of ecological issues in coastal mgmt amongst the members				
3) Village level information centres established, staffed, operational - e-learning modules for bioshield establishment and management - Database and Training modules for livelihoods	3a) 4 VRCs and 10 VKCs established in India 3b) 4 Telecentres and 12 VICs in Sri Lanka 3c) Number of users by gender and social group 3d) Learning modules tested and applied in project villages				
4) Rural Business Incubation Centres (RBIC) established <b>(SL)</b>	4a) # of users (M / F) 4b) # of business plans developed				
5) Training completed for local Disaster Reduction planning	5a) Gender sensitive training and information materials produced, distributed and used. 5b) Presence of multiple local organizations engaged in training, assessment, and planning				

	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Collection methods</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
6) Gender balanced village level institutions set up	6a) Balanced number of men and women participating in planning, training and implementation of project activities 6b) Village level project staff are gender-balanced.				

**ANNEX II: Logical Framework Analysis/Model – Revised June 24, 2006**

<p><b>Project Goal</b> Reduce vulnerability of rural poor in coastal areas of Sri Lanka and India to natural disasters.</p>	<p><b>Impact</b> Coastal communities can manage disasters more effectively using biophysical and socio-economic tools and local planning processes.</p>	<p><b>Performance Measures</b> Reduced casualties among coastal poor in India and Sri Lanka due to natural disasters.  Reduced damage to property and productive resources (cropland, groundwater, etc.)</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> State supported integrated coastal zone management plan is in place  <b>Risk:</b> Improper land use pattern in the coastal areas (beyond local control)</p>
<p><b>Results</b></p>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Indicators</b></p>	<p><b>Assumptions and Risks</b></p>
	<p>1) Bioshield management system assures sustainability and local benefits 2) Technical and participatory management capacity built at the local level to sustain bioshield and VIC / VKC  3) Pilot communities (especially women and poor) have strengthened their livelihoods through better access to and control of productive natural resources and information.  4) Local governments and other organizations develop effective Disaster risk reduction (DRR) plans  5) Women participate more actively in community decision-making about natural resource management and information.</p>	<p>1) Bioshield condition: survival rates, density and size of seedlings at conclusion of project. 2) Committee members report satisfaction with provisions for resource access and benefit-sharing. 2b) Local NGOs have new programs to support bioshield and VKC / VIC as part of village development efforts. 3a) Larger percentage of families originally below poverty line have increased their income above the poverty line 3b) Larger percentage of women-headed households showing increased income 3c) Number of new enterprises started by men and women 3d) Groundwater quality improved through rehabilitation schemes (<b>SL only</b>) 4a) Presence of village-based DDR plans produced collaboratively by local organizations 4b) DDR plans adopted by local government authorities 4b) Village-based DRR plans influence senior government plans (<b>SL only</b>) 5) Increase in female membership on management committees, and in leadership positions amongst local organizations</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> benefits can flow to target groups  <b>Risk:</b> benefits mostly captured by local elites/dominant social groups  <b>Assumption:</b> Local and other donor support for VKC and livelihood projects is sufficient to achieve sustainability  <b>Risk:</b> insufficient local or donor support to achieve sustainability</p>

	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Assumptions and Risks</b>
	<p>1) Ecosystem rehabilitation through mangrove and non-mangrove plantations at suitable sites near project villages</p> <p>2) Village committees established and working on ecosystem management</p> <p>3) Village level information centres established, staffed and operational                      - e-learning modules for bioshield establishment and management                      - Database and Training modules for livelihoods</p> <p>4) Rural Business Incubation Centres (RBIC) established (SL only).</p> <p>5) Training completed for local Disaster Reduction planning</p> <p>6) Gender balanced village level institutions set up</p>	<p>1) Area of mangrove and non-mangrove bioshields established.</p> <p>2a) Committee membership includes resource users, diverse social groups and local government.                      2b) Increased understanding of ecological issues in coastal management amongst the members</p> <p>3a) 4 VRCs and 10 VKCs established in India                      3b) 4 Telecentres and 12 VICs in Sri Lanka                      3c) Number of users by gender and social group                      3d) Learning modules tested and applied in project villages</p> <p>4a) Number of male and female users                      4b) Number of business plans developed</p> <p>5a) Gender sensitive training and information materials produced, distributed and used.                      5b) Presence of multiple local organizations engaged in training, assessment, and planning.</p> <p>6a) Balanced number of men and women participating in planning, training and implementation of project activities                      6b) Village level project staff are gender-balanced.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> suitable sites and planting materials are available for bioshield development.</p> <p><b>Risks:</b> sites may not be ecologically appropriate, govt approvals may be delayed; high quality seedlings may not be available in time.</p> <p><b>Assumption:</b> women are able to participate freely in the project activities within the villages</p> <p><b>Risks:</b> traditional values and governing structures restrict the participation of women</p>