Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E Officer

M&E Officers lead the implementation of M&E activities in the field. Typically they are based in field offices and/or in regional offices. The role of M&E Officer may slightly vary by organization and project, but in general it is responsible for designing routine monitoring forms, providing training on data collection, compiling and aggregating data, maintaining databases, generating descriptive statistics, and providing support to surveys and evaluations. The M&E Officer's core competencies include:

1. M&E concepts
2. Program design
3. M&E system set up and operationalization
4. Qualitative techniques for monitoring
5. Quantitative techniques for data collection
6. Data analysis
7. Reporting
8. Technical support to sub-awardees and partner M&E teams

1. M&E Concepts

1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of M&E concepts such as participatory monitoring, mixed-methods, data quality assurance, theory of change (ToC), and the purpose of M&E in program design and implementation.

1.2 Able to clearly define the project cycle and results chain: needs and capacities assessment, problem analysis, development of conceptual framework or ToC, selection and implementation of activities, and monitoring and evaluation.

1.3 Identify signs of progress along the project cycle; has an operational understanding of different types of indicators: output, outcome, and impact; and the different sources for indicators: USAID Office of Food for Peace, USAID Mission, and custom indicators.

1.4 Demonstrate capacity to understand, interpret and use a log frame, M&E plan, Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS), and Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT).

1.5 Be familiar with strategies and tools for tracking project progress and bottlenecks and measuring cross-cutting objectives, including gender and environment.

1.6 Understand the difference between descriptive and inferential statistics.

1.7 Understand the concept of participatory monitoring.

1.8 Know how to plan for and use mixed-methods research.

1.9 Understand the basic concepts of data quality assurance.

2. Program Design

2.1 Assess the needs and capacities of the target communities.

2.2 Involve communities in problem analysis and project design.

2.3 Be knowledgeable about the purpose of a ToC.

2.4 Implement gender assessment studies.

2. Program Design (continued)

2.5 Be familiar with environmental indicators and initial environmental assessments.

3. M&E System Set Up and Operationalization

3.1 Contribute to the development of a comprehensive M&E plan.

3.2 Identify and elaborate key M&E activities.

3.3 Train field staff on data gathering and data compilation techniques.

3.4 Identify data users and their information needs.

3.5 Develop routine/activity monitoring data gathering forms and reporting formats.

3.6 Assess/monitor community participation in and satisfaction with implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (including protection issues).

3.7 Control for double counting/create beneficiary unique identifiers.

3.8 Know how to triangulate information.

3.9 Implement data quality assurance activities according to the M&E plan (e.g. data verification and spot checks).

3.10 Understand the five dimensions of data quality (validity, precision, integrity, reliability, and timeliness.

4. Qualitative Techniques for Monitoring

4.1 Develop topical outlines/key topics to facilitate discussions to guide data collection.

4.2 Identify appropriate tools and methods to gather gender-sensitive information.

4.3 Use qualitative data:

    4.3.1 To interpret quantitative data.

    4.3.2 To inform quantitative data collection design (e.g., data to collect, coded responses).

    4.3.3 To verify quantitative data.

    4.3.4 For open-ended inquiry.

4.4 Understand how to use and monitor/supervise key qualitative methods:

    4.4.1 Key informant interviews.

    4.4.2 Focus group discussions.

    4.4.3 Direct observations.

    4.4.4 Commonly used interactive tools (e.g., maps, matrix, calendars).

The Core Competency Series was developed by staff from The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program with significant contributions from the various task forces of the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Network. The series intends to provide hiring managers, program managers, and program staff with explanations of the basic skills and knowledge senior technical staff may possess to carry out their positions effectively. Official job titles, functions, and requirements may vary based on organization and program.

5. Quantitative Techniques for Data Collection

5.1 Know commonly used probability and purposive sampling techniques.

5.2 Know potential sources of and precautions to protect against sampling biases.

5.3 Design tools for routine monitoring data collection.

5.4 Develop protocols for routine monitoring and surveys.

5.5 Conduct physical measurements (e.g., anthropometric, infrastructure, plot size, produce measurement).

5.6 Implement structured surveys, including:

    5.6.1 Field-testing of survey instruments.

    5.6.2 Recognize sampling and non-sampling errors and use strategies to minimize them.

    5.6.3 Train and coordinate enumerators.

    5.6.4 Use interviewing techniques.

    5.6.5 Supervise and test validity and reliability of data in the field.

5.7 Manage surveys, including:

    5.7.1 Logistics planning.

    5.7.2 Gathering required information to construct sampling frame.

    5.7.3 Designing and facilitating training for enumerators.

    5.7.4 Overseeing data collection.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Manage data entry, including:

    6.1.1 Design data entry applications in common packages such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, and Epi Info™.

    6.1.2 Enter data into Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, or any other simple database.

    6.1.3 Organize data in such a way that it is easily accessible by staff concerned.

    6.1.4 Manage the database.

6.2 Conduct descriptive analysis, including:

    6.2.1 Possess the basic skills for using SPSS Statistics or a similar data analytic software.

    6.2.2 Understand the concept of central tendency and measures of spread.

    6.2.3 Know how to use frequency tables, cross tables, correlations, means testing, and different measures of central tendency.

    6.2.4 Understand tests of significance (e.g., p-values, confidence intervals).

7. Reporting

7.1 Collect, compile, and aggregate reports from field staff.

7.2 Check for data consistency and compare them with the target.

7.3 Interpret quantitative results.

7. Reporting (continued)
7.4 Interpret and report qualitative data.
7.5 Use quantitative and qualitative data in combination.

7.6 Know how to write narrative for reports, including:
      7.6.1 Developing and effectively presenting case studies and success stories in reports.
      7.6.2 Collecting and using quotations reports and success stories effectively and responsibly.

7.7 Create and use tables in reports and presentations.
7.8 Create and use graphs and charts in reports and presentations.
7.9 Create and deliver oral presentations.
7.10 Design and effectively use PowerPoint presentations.

Notes

1. While the M&E Officer implements monitoring activities in the field, the M&E Manager is responsible for the design of the system, tools, and methodologies.
2. While sampling strategy and sample size calculation will be done by the M&E Manager, the M&E Officer must have a basic understanding about commonly used sampling techniques
3. While the M&E Manager is responsible for developing the qualitative and quantitative tools, the M&E Officer must have the skills to use them.
4. While statistical data analysis should be conducted by the M&E Manager, the M&E Officer must be able to generate frequency tables and compute mean, median, and standard deviation.
5. While analytical report preparation is the responsibility of M&E Manager, the M&E Officer must be able to compile the reports collected from the field, produce simple tables and graphs using Microsoft Excel, and interpret the numbers so that it is easy for the users to understand and make sense of the numbers.