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AFGHANISTAN

TRAINING REPORT

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION TRAINING DELIVERED IN KABUL

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A Report on

The Participatory Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Training

*Intercontinental Hotel, Kabul City
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
February 22nd to March 5th , 2009*

Implemented by:
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Table of Contents

BACKGROUND.....	3
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (IIRR).....	3
MESSAGES	4
COURSE RATIONALE	4
WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES	4
COURSE FRAMEWORK.....	5
SURFACING OF PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS	5
1. KNOWLEDGE	6
2. SKILLS	6
3. ATTITUDES	6
4. OTHERS	7
COURSE METHODOLOGY	7
WORKSHOP SESSIONS	8
COURSE REVIEWS	8
CHANGES IN CONFIDENCE TESTS	8
PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE TRAINING	10
FACILITATORS' OBSERVATION	10
CONCLUSIONS	11
ANNEX 1	13
TRAINING SCHEDULE; WEEK 1	13
WEEK 2	14
PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	15

Background

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has long been important for funding agencies in assessing actual change against stated objectives to find out whether interventions are successful or not. This usually involves external experts evaluating against indicators that have been determined externally or through rigid, imposed monitoring procedures. Yet organizations are now increasingly using M&E for internal learning and continual improvement of their work. They also now realize that M&E needs to happen with a wide range of stakeholders to make it more participatory.

In Afghanistan, the Environment Law recognizes the importance of community participation in the management of its natural resources, and recognizes community-based resource management as the country's main strategy for rehabilitating, conserving and protecting its degraded forests, wetlands and rangelands.

The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), tasked to monitor the compliance of community-based resource management activities to the provisions of the Environment Law, through the Biodiversity Support Program launched a small grants program to support the initiatives on community-based resource management. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) uses community-based resource management as its main strategy for implementing its program on Sustainable Land Management.

BSP/NEPA is a capacity-building program for NEPA, and its main purpose is to strengthen the agency's ability to implement its mandate under the environmental law.

Recognizing the need to enhance the skills and knowledge of field extension workers from NEPA and MAIL to monitor Community-based Resource Management activities, the USAID Biodiversity Support Program for NEPA together with the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) coordinated the implementation of a training on Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for two weeks from **23 February** to **6 March 2008** at the Intercontinental hotel, Kabul, with 25 participants in attendance.

Two consultants from IIRR, Charles Warriia, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Manager for Africa, and Kennedy Igbokwe, IIRR-Uganda Country Director facilitated the course.

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction is an outgrowth of the Mass Education and Rural Reconstruction Movement founded by Dr. Y.C. James Yen in China in 1923. This pioneering effort in sustainable development identified and taught practical strategies by which the rural poor may improve their lives and develop their communities.

Since its inception in the Philippines in 1924, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) has been a training and research institution for capacity building and development. Globally, IIRR has provided enormous capacity building and technical support

to many organizations and other development actors comprising local government, CSOs and the international development community. In our programs, the IIRR-Africa theme of “Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction” is synonymous with “Managing for Impact”.

Over the years, IIRR has consolidated expertise and experience in monitoring and evaluation, ranging from designing PM&E systems, conducting project baseline and end-line surveys and evaluations, carrying out project mid-term reviews, organizational capacity assessments, gender audits and carrying out both advertised and customized trainings on PM&E.

Messages

Key messages were delivered by Engr M. Baheer – Executive Deputy Director General of NEPA, Sulliman Shah Salari, Director of the Division of Natural Heritage and Protection of NEPA and Director Bahktani of the Division of Monitoring and Evaluation of MAIL during the opening of the two-week training. All of the three speakers welcomed the opportunity that such training will be conducted. They also shared their personal journey in advocating for participatory development within their agencies.. They expressed hope that the participants will make use of this training so that monitoring can be strengthened in Afghanistan.

Course Rationale

Around the globe, there is an emerging interest in the best practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is seen as a way of maintaining participation throughout the project cycle, of involving project beneficiaries in identifying and tackling indicators of success and of maintaining accountability of programs to their beneficiaries and stakeholders. While increased attention is given to the topic by donors and large agencies, there have been few attempts to learn from the experiences of practitioners in the field who are using these methods, and who have a great deal to share about successes and barriers to good practice.

Workshop Framework and Objectives

Participatory Planning Monitoring and Evaluation are integral parts of IIRR’s work. It is a mechanism through which IIRR learns and become accountable to itself, to its partners or stakeholders and to the development process in general. As such, IIRR has over time developed its own PPM & E framework and systems. All IIRR projects have an M&E plan and we have supported partners to carry out a baseline survey, develop and implement PPM & E systems as well and to develop PPM&E guides and set up systems. Over the years IIRR has also developed a training and educational program in participatory planning monitoring and evaluation which has benefited thousands in the region. These courses have are offered globally on a regular basis. Some of the organizations that have utilized IIRR’s PPME services include ICRAF, ICCO, Royal Netherlands Embassy Tanzania, Concern Somalia, Action Aid, Oxfam Novib, Oxfam GB and FAO South Sudan among others.

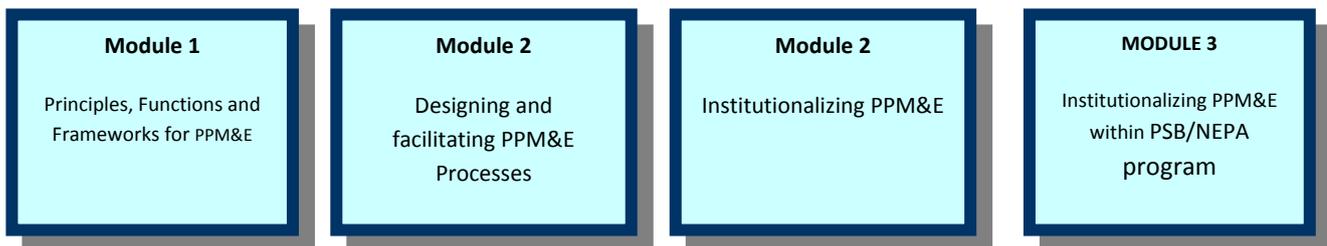
Recognizing the need to enhance the skills and knowledge of field extension workers from NEPA and MAIL to monitor and evaluate Community-based Resource Management initiatives, the USAID Biodiversity Support Program for NEPA (ECODIT) contracted the

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) to conduct a training on Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for 25 selected staff from the two organizations, between **February 23rd to March 6th 2008**, in Kabul.

Specifically, the training in Afghanistan aimed to:

1. Explain the concepts related to participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation to the participants from NEPA/MAIL
2. Build capacity of participants to link planning, monitoring and evaluation to learning, accountability and transparency to their work in natural resource management
3. Build capacity of participants in designing participatory monitoring and evaluation instruments in support of the government CBRM program
4. Enable participants to adapt and apply tools and techniques for participatory monitoring and evaluation of community-based resource management projects
5. Impart skills and techniques for data collection, analysis and reporting for timely decision making

Course Framework



<p>Session 1: Personal experiences in PPM&E at NEPA and MAIL</p> <p>Session 2: Concepts, principles and framework of PPM&E</p> <p>Session 3: Sustainable human development, good governance and PPM&E</p> <p>Session 4: Result-based management</p>	<p>Session 1: Introduction to PPM&E system design</p> <p>Session 2: PPM&E tools</p> <p>Session 3: Designing a PPM&E system</p> <p>Field practicum Exercise</p> <p>Session 4: Conducting an impact assessment/evaluation</p>	<p>Session 1: Knowledge management – Participatory systematization, documentation and communication</p> <p>Session 2: Information Management System (MIS)</p> <p>Session 3: Action planning and presentation of action plans</p>
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Surfacing of Participants' Expectations

The workshop facilitators introduced an activity to help participants know each other. Strips of paper were distributed for participants to write what they expected to achieve out of the training. The guiding questions were;

1. What are your interests and concerns about PPME, which you hope to have addressed during this workshop?
2. What processes and methods would facilitate your learning and enhance sharing of experiences?

The participants' responses were then summarized as follows:

1. Knowledge

- On monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and implementation
- In planning and protecting natural resources
- In elements that relate to planning
- The basics of PPME
- Information about adverse impacts of environment
- Learning important issues/ aspects on conducting monitoring and evaluation.
- On making action plans for monitoring and evaluation of natural heritage?
- Awareness on natural resources
- On the impact of M&E on rural development
- New systems/methods of monitoring and evaluation
- Capacity building on resource management and solutions for rehabilitation, development and sustainable use of forests.
- Rehabilitation and sustainable use of grazing lands

2. Skills

- Planning, monitoring and evaluation in a practical project
- Convincing people to cooperate in design and implementation to protect biodiversity
- Evaluation in implementing a project. If we don't know about it we cannot have positive results
- Protection of biodiversity
- Protection and sustainable use of wetlands
- Rehabilitation and protection of ecosystems
- Making log frames and writing proposals
- Technical methods about monitoring of natural resources that can be implemented
- Monitoring of biodiversity
- P M & E practically in the field
- Practical planning for PM&E
- Protection of plants

3. Attitudes

- There should be coordination and cooperation between people in order to protect the natural heritage

4. Others

- Similar workshops should be organized in provinces with the participation of religious scholars.
- The management of natural resources should make us self reliable
- Every subject should be explained well for the benefit of all
- Evaluation and monitoring should be explained clearly
- The training should give priority to industrial society of Afghanistan

Course methodology

Preparation for the course was done in coordination with the ECODIT staff in Kabul.

To make the training as realistic and practical as possible, IIRR was given access to all relevant ECODIT project and program documents upon which to base the design, discussion and practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation course. A draft training design was developed by IIRR and then presented to ECODIT team for comments, which was accordingly revised before the commencement of the training.

In line with IIRR's participatory and learning-by-doing philosophy, the PM&E training was output oriented and focused on 'practice', and aimed to help NEPA/ MAIL staff acquire both conceptual and practical skills on how to monitor and evaluate project and program activities in a participatory manner.

The training workshop engaged the participants in a set of activities and exercises to stimulate learning, facilitate discussion and sharing. The training built on participants' experiences to develop a common understanding, appreciation and competence for participatory monitoring and evaluation within the context of CBNRM program in Afghanistan.

The training methodology employed the Training-of-Trainers (TOT) approach and mentoring so that the participants could replicate the training in their areas of operation. It was conducted for two weeks, and provided field workers from MAIL and NEPA with tools and skills for mobilizing communities to take responsibility and accountability for their own development goals.

The IIRR methodology is modern, varied and participatory. During the two-weeks programme, the facilitators used the following methodology;

- Short lectures by facilitators introducing new concepts and stimulating discussion
- Individual exercises and small group work
- Plenary discussions
- Question and answer sessions
- Field visits to the village in Parwan province

The training materials were translated into Dari, the local language, and each session was delivered with assistance of interpreters and translators appointed by ECODIT, including the group-work and other discussion sessions.

In linking the course theory to practice, a field practicum was conducted in a village outside Kabul. The exercise enhanced participants' practical skills in the application of participatory tools and methodologies for planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs. The participants were able to learn during the practicum how to use some of the key participatory data collection tools and learning techniques to understand the local context, especially, the community natural resource use and livelihood assets. Through this process they were able to determine the key problems, issues and opportunities facing the community and used the information generated towards developing a participatory monitoring and evaluation system for new or existing CBNRM projects.

Workshop sessions

Thematic overviews were presented in the plenary as an introduction to the sessions. Participants' experiences were shared in small groups through formal paper presentations. Course facilitators, provided guide questions for the small groups to identify trends/gaps/issues and enabling factors in PPME experiences.

After small-group exercise outputs, the groups presented in the plenary, where the facilitators gave a synthesis of each session. The final session of the workshop involved Action Planning, where the facilitators reviewed all previous sessions' outputs and incorporated challenges presented by several participants.

The workshop design generally matched the participants' expectations regarding content, interest in "how-to" in PPME, negotiation of stakeholders' agenda, capacity building, data collection tools, institutionalization and scaling up as well as integration of PPME into the project cycle. The workshop addressed participants' expectations by sharing a number of field experiences across the different agencies. Concepts, issues and contextual factors remained the focus of the workshop. The discussions were guided to distil shared experiences into lessons and principles in the practice of PPME.

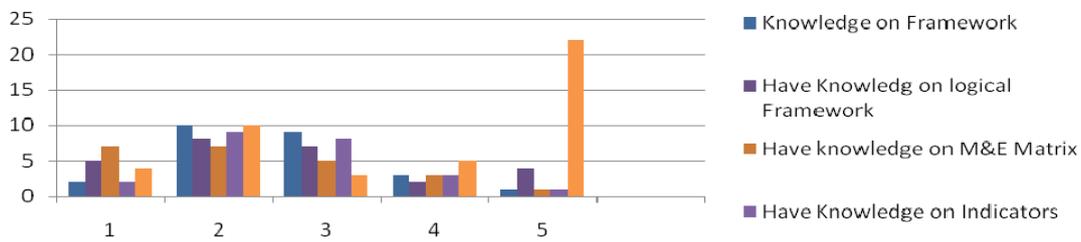
Course reviews

Every three days, the facilitators, together with the ECODIT team, reviewed the progress of the training and made necessary modifications to meet the needs of the participants and ensure quality service delivery. Significant revisions and modifications to the course materials were conducted, based on feedback from training sessions and the need for further learning and reading materials useful for monitoring and evaluation of Community-based Resource Management (CRNM) was incorporated.

Changes in Confidence Tests

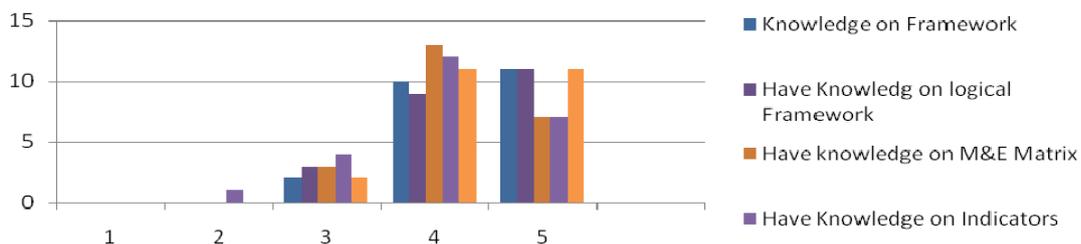
Before the training, a Confidence Test was administered to the participants, to gauge their level of confidence relating to specific topics on PPME that were to be covered by the course. The chart below displays the results of the pre-training confidence test.

Pre-Confidence Test Knowledge on the Framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and Evaluating CBRM projects

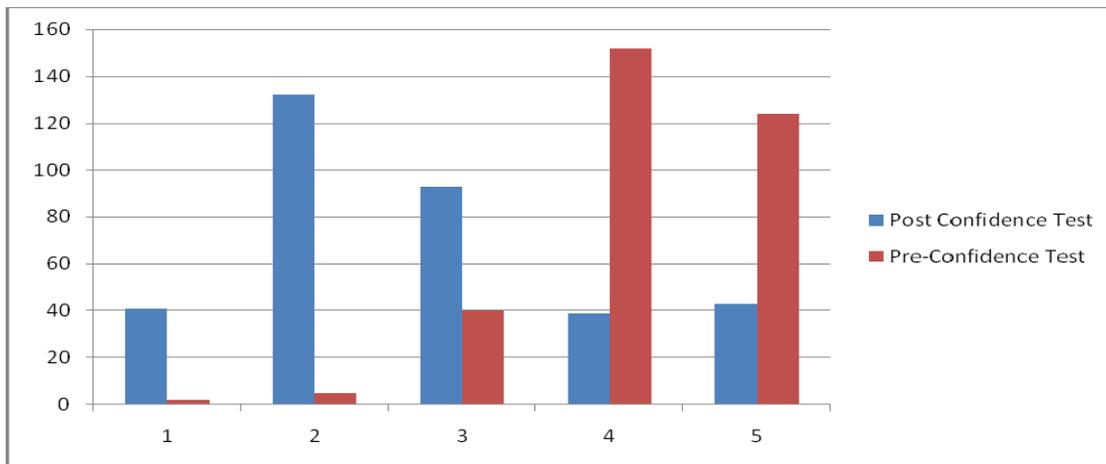


After the training, a Confidence Test was administered to the participants, to gauge their level of confidence relating to specific topics on PPME that were covered by the Course. The chart below displays the results of the pre-training confidence test.

Post-Confidence Test Knowledge on the Framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and Evaluating CBRM projects



The table below provides a comparative analysis of the pre-and post-training confidence tests for the participants.



Participant Suggestions and Observations on the training

At the end of the training, participants gave an evaluation of the course and their suggestions and recommendations are summarized as follows:

- There was not enough time to go through all the course materials.
- The teaching methodology and translation was very good
- The time of training should have been longer than two weeks
- Such kind of training should be held continuously at different levels
- It was suggested that ECODIT and other supporting organizations should conduct such trainings in the provinces for NEPA staff.
- Since PPME training was useful, it should be offered to all monitoring and evaluation staff from the agencies of NEPA/MAIL
- In future the training material should more simplified and submitted at the beginning of the training.

Facilitators' observation

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) involves assessment of change through processes that involve many people or groups, each of whom is affecting or affected by the impacts being assessed. Negotiation leads to agreement on how progress should be measured and the findings acted upon. It is a challenging process for all concerned, as different stakeholders must examine their assumptions about what constitutes progress – and together deal with the contradictions and conflicts that can emerge.

The general purpose of this training was to deepen the understanding of methodologies and practices in PPME, an understanding that afforded the facilitators to develop action strategies for widening and enhancement of the PPME practice.

The workshop brought together a group of believers and enthusiasts who were extraordinary bearers and repositories of community-based grassroots experiences in participation and

rural development. These participants were conversant with field problems in agriculture, health, natural resource management, integrated development, among others and appeared to be committed to finding lasting solutions to the local natural resource problems. The task of the facilitators was to harness this collective wealth of participatory wisdom, skills, experiences and commitment toward involvement of local populations in monitoring and evaluation natural resource management.

To best meet the capacity needs of the participants, the course period required a little more ground preparation and a prior training needs assessment and comprehensive preparation and packaging of training materials.

Conclusions

Participatory natural resource management has become an accepted ethic and practice in Afghanistan's development initiatives and a logical extension of this has been the rapidly growing interest in how to ensure wider community-based participation in PPM&E. This has stimulated greater appreciation for an adaptive management approach in which research and implementation activities are mutually reinforcing.

With numerous questions about M&E arising from the natural resource policy sector and the environmental law in Afghanistan, more information is being sought to provide answers for environmental reconstruction and to improve the planning of conservation and regeneration efforts for the country's natural resources. The difficulty of pursuing environmental information for decision-making in times of rapid change and great uncertainty will continue to raise questions about alternative approaches to natural resource management in Afghanistan.

It is against a growing interest in how the wider Afghan community can contribute to the participatory monitoring and evaluation of the local natural resources that the biodiversity program of USAID (ECODIT), came together with the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAIL), to build capacity of their field staff on participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation, with a view to cascading such skills to the community, through wider participatory development initiatives.

In part fuelled by growing scarcity of funds from the local donors such as USAID, UNEP, pressure is growing for implementing agencies like NEPA and MAIL to prove that resources allocated to environmental management is having the intended impacts. This is also true of the investments made in community-based natural resource management efforts, many of which were made in good faith over the past decade and can be seen as a form of research. This is matched by growing community concerns about environmental problems and the impact of their own local efforts at mitigating some of the excesses.

Even though taking on board new principles such as 'participatory development' and 'environmental sustainability' has created tensions as existing ways of working are challenged, combined pressures to prove performance, while working more efficiently and effectively will encourage MAIL and NEPA to ask how they can improve the local community-

based resource management within the Afghanistan context. It is the IIRR's firm belief that the PPM&E Course will enhance MAIL and NEPA's capacity for critical reflection, and learning from success and failure.

It is noteworthy, that effective PPM&E will require some efforts at local adaptation both within the institutions of NEPA and MAIL, as well as the wider Afghan community and local stakeholders. Many of the more complex challenges will arise when these organizations begin to realize the widespread repercussions of shifting to include more stakeholders in assessing the changes caused by their natural resource management initiatives. While many are keen to learn more about the internal processes and external impacts in order to perform better, the success will continue to lie in bottom-up approaches to meaningful participation by all beneficiaries, stakeholders and other interested bodies and effective efforts aimed at empowering local communities to take charge of the entire process.

Recommendations

The venue for the training was appropriate, well situated and had good security.

In future, an advance team will be required to conduct a visit and carry out a comprehensive Training Needs Assessment (TNA), as well as understand the geographical and meteorological conditions of the proposed training area. Similar visits should be conducted for proposed field visit sites, with adequate time allocation for travel and interaction with local communities and leaders.

Because the training involved step-by-step translation and interpretation, adequate time will be required for such training in future, to allow for preparation, review and production of training materials, while at the same time, creating flexibility for on-site reviews and modification of training materials and handouts. The interpreters will also need to meet with the course facilitators prior to the training and after each session to go through the training materials and develop a way of working together.

Annex 1

Training Schedule; Week 1

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:30-9:00	Welcome and opening Introduction of PPM&E Introduction of Participants	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection
9:00 – 10:30	Leveling of expectations Confidence test Course overview	Session 2: Concepts, principles and Framework of PPM&E	Session 4: Result-Based Management	Session 2: Simulation Exercise/ Group work	Session 3: Designing a PPM&E System
10:30-11:00	Tea Break				
11:00-1:00	Introduction to Action planning	Session 2: Concepts, principles and Framework of PPM&E	Module 2: Designing PPM&E and facilitating PPM&E processes Session 1: Introduction to PPM&E system	Session 2: Continuation	Simulation Exercise / Group Work
12:00-1:00	Lunch Break				
1:00 – 1:30	Prayer Time				
2:00-4:00	Module 1: PPM&E in Development Context Session 1: Personal Experiences in PPM&E at NEPA and MAIL	Session 2: Continuation Session 3: Sustainable Human Development, Good governance and PPM&E	Session 2: PPM&E Tools	Presentation of Simulation Exercise/group Work	

Week 2

Time	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:30- 9:00	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection
9.00 – 10.30	Presentation of Simulation Exercise / Group Work	FIELD PRACTICUM	Field Practicum Analysis and report Preparation	Session 4: Conducting an impact assessment/ evaluation	Module 3: Institutionalizing PPME within CBRM program Framework	Action planning
10:30-11:00	Tea Break					
11:00-1:00	Continuation on the presentation	FIELD PRACTICUM	Field Practicum Analysis and Report Preparation	Session 4: Conducting an impact assessment/ evaluation	Session 1: Knowledge management, participatory systematization and documentation and communication	Action planning
12:00-1:00	Lunch Break					
1.00 – 1.30	Prayer Time					
2:00-4:00	Introduction to Field Practicum	FIELD PRACTICUM	Presentation of Field Practicum Output	Simulation exercise and Group work	Session 2: management Information System (MIS) – better use information management system	Course Synthesis. Course Evaluation Closing ceremonies and distribution of certifications

Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Training Outline	Topics/ Sessions	Handouts
Course Introduction	Introductory activities	
	Leveling of expectations	
	Pre-confidence test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence test (pre-course) form
	Overview of training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course description • Training framework • Training schedule
Module1: PPM&E in Development Context	Session 1: Personal Experiences in PPM&E at NEPA and MAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format for participants sharing of experiences
	Session 2: Concepts, Principles and Framework of PPM&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPM&E basic concepts • The log Frame hierarchy • Five evaluation criteria • Conventional versus Participatory PME • Useful reading materials
	Session 3: Framework of People and Ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of sustainable human development (SHD) • Framework of people and ecosystem • Sustainable livelihood framework approach to NRM
Module 2: Designing PPM&E and Facilitating PPM&E processes	Session 4: Designing a PPME system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to designing PPME system • Project cycle Example 1 • Project cycle Example 2 • Definition of an indicator • Common types of indicators • PPM data collections tools • Recording methods and tools

Training Outline	Topics/ Sessions	Handouts
	Session 5: Simulation exercise – Designing PPME system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop simulation exercise • Example of CBNRM problem tree • Example of CBNRM • • objective tree • Example of objective tree with assumptions • Example of log frame matrix • PPME matrix (A sample) • Relationship between Problem analysis and objective analysis • Writing objective statements • A simple proposal writing format
	Field Practicum	PPM field practicum guide
	Session 6 Conducting participatory evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact assessment • Participatory evaluation
Module 3: Institutionalizing PPM&E within PSB and NEPA program	Session 7: Knowledge management- participatory systematization, documentation and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalizing PPME
	Session 8: Information management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management information system
Action planning		Action planning guide
Training synthesis		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key steps for facilitating PPME • CBNRM process • Project accountability- Limits of control
Post-confidence test		
Training Evaluation		Training evaluation form