





Knowledge Management and Monitoring & Evaluation: Proposed Collaboration Activities across the Program Cycle

Both Knowledge Management (KM) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) facilitate collaborative learning, and require intentionally working with others to be successful. Despite these similarities, some confusion exists about how these two sectors should work together for stronger programming; leading to many difficulties in day-to-day program activity and overall quality and impact.

A key challenge is that M&E and KM planning is seldom done together, with increasingly negative consequences. KM is often seen as more reactive and is hardly intentionally planned for and resourced, with KM activity largely siloed within programs. And while M&E considerations are deliberately embedded in all programs (between 5-10% of total program budget is usually allocated to M&E); KM is often brought in as an afterthought or at a later stage, leading to implementation constraints for this type of activity.

These teams often work as silos within many projects/programs, resulting in obstacles such as redundancy in efforts due to limited communication and information sharing. Many implementation issues are missed without a strong M&E/KM connection. Each function usually develops different indicators, tools and systems for reporting, and with limited coordination between them, systems are often not compatible. This lack of coordination leads to limited results flow and understanding gaps between the field and HQ level. And, as there is usually very little field-level KM, useful learning gathered from M&E activities is often not recognized or applied on a project.

These challenges have led to a growing need for sustained and coordinated collaboration between project-level KM and M&E functions, in order to achieve stronger program design and implementation that lead to better results.

This document aims to provide practical guidance on activities that can be jointly undertaken by KM and M&E program functions across a program's cycle to develop a highly coordinated and functional synergy between KM and M&E. This should help facilitate collaborative learning and ensure that knowledge formulated and shared is based on rigorous evidence. It will also inform management decisions and drive the application of these learnings to current project decision-making & future project design, ultimately contributing directly to meaningful programming.

This document is an accompanying resource to the *Infographic on the Complementary Relationship between Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation*, which outlines the value that M&E and KM collaboration can bring to each sector, and to programming as a whole.

Figure 1: Suggested activities at various program cycle stages to drive collaboration between KM & ME program functions for stronger Collaboration

PROGRAM	PROPOSED COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES
STAGES/COMPONENTS ⁱ	
COUNTRY/REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING (Process to determine the best strategic approach in a given country or region. Based on U.S. development policy priorities, country and/or regional priorities, and USAID's comparative advantage and available foreign assistance resources, among other factors.)	Review previous relevant evaluations, lessons learned, recommendations etc. and collate relevant information to be included in new program design
PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION (Process for defining how to achieve results to ensure that efforts are complementary and aligned in support of a strategy. Typically incorporates multiple activities organized around, and implemented to achieve, a common purpose.)	 Review existing information/documentation to identify outstanding research questions from previous efforts that can be included in ongoing learning efforts/agendas Identify opportunities for regular program implementation reviews to highlight successes, challenges and promising practices and include these in the work plan Implement regular program implementation reviews/AARs/peer assists and other processes to ensure highlighted successes, challenges and promising practices/ new learning are documented, shared and implemented Outline an efficient, user-friendly information system that works to make information easily and quickly retrievable
ACTIVITY DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION (Process for further defining how to implement an activity contributing to a project. Activities implemented through a variety of mechanisms, such as a contract, direct agreement with the partner country government, grant to a local organization, or directly by USAID staff (e.g. policy dialogue or capacity development).	 Work together to streamline suggested indicator list and ensure that only data to be used is collected Incorporate relevant and credible indicators that evaluate the effectiveness of KM efforts into monitoring plans to help increase integration of KM into programming Fully develop, test and refine data management and information systems and accompanying data collection tools that make information easily and quickly retrievable Develop taxonomies for documents and folders so information is easy to retrieve. Identify and work to resolve bottlenecks that are hindering M&E knowledge flow (to field, from field, to HQ, from HQ, etc.) Develop data visualization/information 'packaging' tools that transform heavy data into easily understood/assimilated resources Develop 'how to' guides that transfer easily to support institutional memory capacity
MONITORING & EVALUATION (Monitoring: ongoing & systematic tracking of information relevant to USAID strategies, projects, and activities to support adaptive management and accountability structures at the Agency. Helps reveal whether implementation is on track & results are being achieved. Evaluation: systematic collection & analysis of information from above components as a basis for judgements to improve effectiveness & timed to inform decisions about current & future programming. Evaluation is distinct from assessment or informal reviews.)	 Create regular reflection opportunities for continued learning and adaptation Develop and monitor post evaluation action plans to facilitate the use of relevant findings Frame evaluation findings and recommendations as actionable next steps and disseminate as relevant
COLLABORATION, LEARNING & ADAPTING (Strategic collaboration among a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, continuous learning, and adaptive management connect all components of the Program Cycle. Sources for learning include data from monitoring, research findings, evaluations, analyses, knowledge gained from experience, and other sources.)	 Disseminate results of evaluation and ensure learning and recommendations are incorporated into back into program cycle Develop and structure targeted, high quality products that provide useful information, promote results and contribute to the evidence base Share information on failure, what didn't work and what has been learned through failure

ⁱ From ADS 201 chapter at http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201

Knowledge Management: The process of generating new knowledge, capturing and organizing existing knowledge, adapting knowledge, and sharing it strategically.

The Complementary Relationship of Knowledge Management and Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring & Evaluation: Collecting, storing, analyzing, and transforming data into strategic information so it can be used to make informed decisions.

The Top 10 Ways KM and M&E Work Together

IMPROVE IMPACT

KM can disseminate and build upon existing organizational tools and best practices to improve the impact and success of current projects.

KM can develop and structure products and publications that promote high quality results and make information action-focused.

STRONGER DISSEMINATION

BETTER CONNECTIONS

KM can translate information across technical and functional silos to build learning networks and connections that make M&E better.

DRIVE DATA USE

KM can highlight quality results and design processes and tools for ensuring replication in ongoing implementation.

SAVE TIME

ADVANCE STARTING

programming experience to build on existing learning and

inform new development and

Knowledge

Management

strengthens

Monitoring & Evaluation

processes and results.

KM can draw on past

approaches.

KM can create systems that make it faster and easier to find important information such as indicators, tools, and plans.

addressed going forward.

FORMULATE RESEARCH

documentation to identify

unresolved questions from

previous research to be

QUESTIONS

KM can use existing

KM can advocate with M&E for streamlined sets of indicators that focus on how people use data.

LIGHTEN LOAD

STREAMLINE PROCESSES

KM can support the design of data collection and analysis processes that are fast, efficient, and user-friendly.

HELP YOU STEER

KM can help design data analysis and real time decision making systems so M&E doesn't have to wait until final evaluation.

COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

M&E can provide regular opportunities for collaboration in order to identify, document, and implement new learning.

ASSESSABLE IMPACT

M&E can help identify credible indicators to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of KM activities.

PRECISE MEASUREMENT

M&E can provide guidance on how to effectively measure KM activity for increased legitimacy.

PROMOTE LEARNING

M&E can ensure that data collection feeds into KM learning agenda for reflection, dissemination, and implementation.

SUPPORT AN EXPANDING SECTOR

M&E can share challenges and winning strategies in the journey toward acceptance and integration within international development.

ADVOCATE VALUE

M&E can help leadership and others recognize KM's worth and its distinct, complementary role to M&E.

Monitoring & Evaluation

helps

Knowledge Management assess initiatives and demonstrate contributions to better development outcomes.

STRENGTHEN THEORY OF CHANGE

M&E can include KM in the planning, design, and implementation of frameworks to ensure KM considerations are present.

IDENTIFY LIMITATIONS

M&E can help identify bottlenecks that hinder knowledge flow (to field from field, to HQ, from HQ, etc.)

GROWING KNOWLEDGE BASE

M&E can share key tools, reports, and findings in a timely manner, as well as promising practice as they develop.

SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE

M&E can support KM to accurately develop and adapt tools, surveys, and projects, especially with a collaboration and learning focus.

Definitions adapted from Global Health eLearning Center





